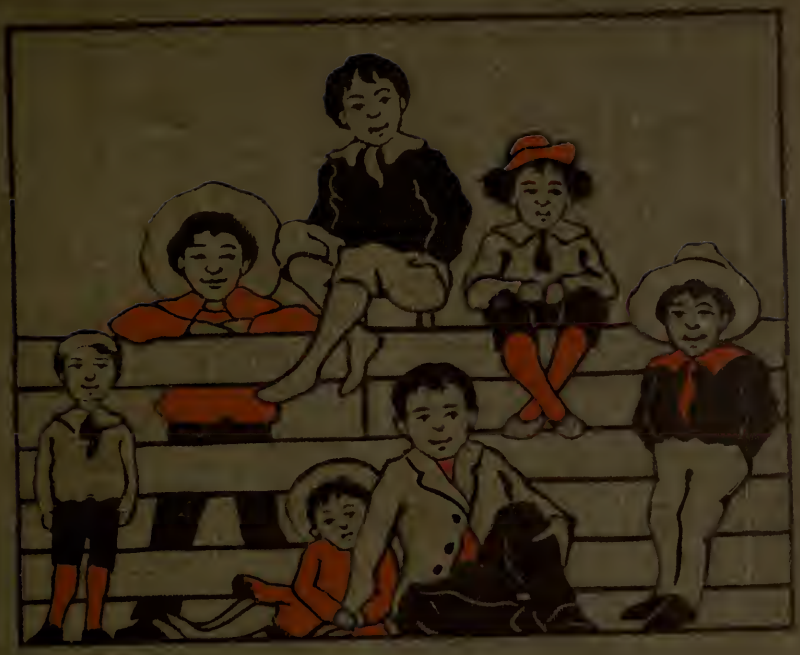

THE WIDOW O'CALLAGHAN'S BOYS

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The Widow O'Callaghan's Boys

"CAN'T I DEPIND ON YE, B'YS?"

The Widow O'Callaghan's Boys

BY
GULIELMA ZOLLINGER

CHICAGO
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ILLUSTRATIONS

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The Widow O'Callaghan's Boys

CHAPTER I

When Mr. O'Callaghan died, after a long, severe, and expensive sickness, he left to his widow a state of unlimited poverty and seven boys.

"Sure, an' sivin's the parfect number," she said through her tears as she looked round on her flock; "and Tim was the bist man as iver lived, may the saints presarve him an' rist him from his dreadful pains!"

Thus did she loyally ignore the poverty. It was the last of February. Soon they must leave the tiny house of three rooms and the farm, for another renter stood ready to take possession. There would be nothing to take with them but their clothing and their scant household furniture, for the farm rent and the sickness

had swallowed up the crop, the farming implements, and all the stock.

Pat, who was fifteen and the oldest, looked gloomily out at one of the kitchen windows, and Mike, the next brother, a boy of thirteen, looked as gloomily as he could out of the other. Mike always followed Pat's lead.

When eleven-year-old Andy was a baby Pat had taken him for a pet. Accordingly, when, two years later, Jim was born, Mike took him in charge. To-day Pat's arm was thrown protectingly over Andy's shoulders, while Jim stood in the embrace of Mike's arm at the other window. Barney and Tommie, aged seven and five respectively, whispered together in a corner, and three-year-old Larry sat on the floor at his mother's feet looking wonderingly up into her face.

Five days the father had slept in his grave, and still there was the same solemn hush of sorrow in the house that fell upon it when he died.

"And what do you intend to do?"

sympathetically asked Mrs. Smith, a well-to-do farmer's wife and a neighbor.

The widow straightened her trim little figure, wiped her eyes, and replied in a firm voice: "It's goin' to town I am, where there 's work to be got, as well as good schoolin' for the b'ys."

"But don't you think that seven boys are almost more than one little woman can support? Hadn't you better put some of them out — for a time?" — the kind neighbor was quick to add, as she saw the gathering frown on the widow's face.

"Sure," she replied, 'twas the Lord give me the b'ys, an' 'twas the Lord took away their blissid father. Do ye think He'd 'a' done ayther wan or the other if He hadn't thought I could care for 'em all? An' I will, too. It may be we 'll be hungry—yis, an' cold, too—wanst in a while. But it won't be for long."

"But town is a bad place for boys, I'm told," urged the neighbor.

"Not for mine," answered the widow quietly. "They're their father's b'ys,

an' I can depind on 'em. They moind me loightest word. Come here, Pat, an' Moike, an' Andy, an' Jim, an' Barney, an' Tommie!"

Obediently the six drew near. She raised Larry to her lap, and looked up touchingly into their faces. "Can't I depind on ye, b'ys?"

"Yes, mother, course you can," answered Pat for them all.

A moment the widow paused to steady her voice, and then resumed, "It's all settled. A-Saturday I goes to town to get a place. A-Monday we moves."

The neighbor saw that it was indeed settled, and, like a discreet woman, did not push her counsel further, but presently took her leave, hoping that the future might be brighter than it promised for Mrs. O'Callaghan and her boys.

"Aise 'em up an' down the hills, Pat, the dear bastes that your father loved!"

Mrs. O'Callaghan and Pat were driving to Wennott behind the team that was

theirs no longer, and it was Saturday. No need to speak to Pat. The whip rested in the socket, and he wished, for his part, that the horses would crawl. He knew how poor they were, and he did not want to go to town. But mother said town, and town it must be.

Down across the railroad track, a little northeast of the depot, was a triangular bit of ground containing about as much as two lots, and on it had been erected a poor little shanty of two rooms. The widow knew of this place, and she meant to try to secure it.

"'Twill jist do for the loikes of us, Pat, for it 's a low rint we're after, an' a place quiet loike an' free from obsarvers. If it's poor ye are, well an' good, but, says I, 'There's no use of makin' a show of it.' For it's not a pretty show that poverty makes, so it ain't, an', says I, 'A pretty show or none.' I see you're of my moind," she continued with a shrewd glance at him, "an' it heartens me whin ye agree with me, for your father's gone,

an' him and me used to agree wonderful."

Pat's lips twitched. He had been very fond of his father. And all at once it seemed to him that town and the shanty were the two most desirable things in their future.

"But, cheer up, Pat! 'Twas your father as was a loively man, d'ye moind? Yon's the town. It's hopin' I am that our business 'll soon be done."

Pat's face brightened a little, for he found the entry into even so small a town as Wennott a diversion. To-day he looked about him with new interest, for here were streets and stores that were to become familiar to him. They entered the town from the south and drove directly to its center, where stood the courthouse in a small square surrounded by an iron hitching-rack. Stores faced it on every side, and above the stores were the lawyers' offices. Which one belonged to the man who had charge of the place the widow wished to rent, she wondered, and

Pat wondered, as she stood by, while he tied the horses.

Above the stores, too, were doctors' offices, and dentists' offices, dress-making-shops, and suites of rooms where young couples and, in some instances, small families lived.

"It's your father's ways you have."

"We'll jist be inquirin', Pat. 'Tis the only way. But what to ask for, I don't know. Shall I be sayin' the bit of a place beyant the tracks?"

"Yes, mother. That's what you want, ain't it?"

"Sure it is, an' nothin' else, naythe r. It's your father's ways you have, Pat. 'Twas himsilf as wint iver straight after what he wanted."

Pat's eyes beamed and he held himself more proudly. What higher praise could there be for him than to be thought like his father?

It chanced that the first lawyer they asked was the right one.

"Luck's for us," whispered the little widow. "Though maybe 'twouldn't have been against us, nayther, if we'd had to hunt a bit."

And then all three set out to look at the poor little property.

"Sure, an' it suits me purpose intoirely," declared Mrs. O'Callaghan when the bargain had been concluded. "An' it's home we'll be goin' at wanst. We've naught to be buyin' the day, seein' we 're movin' in on Monday."

Pat made no answer.

"Did you see thim geese a-squawkin' down by the tracks?" asked Mrs. O'Callaghan, as she and her son settled themselves on the high spring seat of the farm wagon.

Pat nodded.

"There's an idea," said his mother. "There's more than wan in the world as can raise geese. An' geese is nice atin', too. I didn't see no runnin' water near, but there's a plinty of ditches and low places where there'll be water a-standin' a good bit of the toime. An' thim that can 't git runnin' water must take standin'. Yis, Pat, be they geese or min, in this world they must take what they can git an' fat up on it as much as they can, too."

The thin little woman—thin from overwork and anxiety and grief—spoke thus to her tall son, who, from rapid growing, was thin, too, and she spoke with a soberness that told how she was trying to strengthen her own courage to meet the days before her. Absorbed in themselves, mother and son paid no heed to their surroundings, the horses fell into their accustomed brisk trot, and they were soon out on the narrow road that lay between the fields.

"Now, Pat, me b'y," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, rousing herself, "you're the old-

est an' I'll tell you my plans. I'm a-goin' to git washin' to do."

The boy looked at his mother in astonishment.

"I know I'm little," she nodded back at him, "but it's the grit in me that makes me strong. I can do it. For Tim's b'ys an' mine I can do it. Four days in the week I'll wash for other people, Friday I'll wash for my own, Saturday I'll mind for 'em, an' Sunday I'll rist."

A few moments there was silence. The widow seemed to have no more to say.

"An' what am I to do?" finally burst out Pat. "An' what's Mike to do? Sure we can help some way."

"That you can, Pat. I was comin' to that. Did you notice the biggest room in the little house we rinted the day?"

Pat nodded.

"I thought you did. You're an obsarvin' b'y, Pat, jist loike your father. Well, I belave that room will jist about hold three beds an' lave a nate little path betwane ivery two of 'em. It's my notion

we can be nate an' clane if we are poor, an' it'll be your part to make ivery wan of thim beds ivery day an' kape the floor clane. Larry an' mesilf, we'll slape in the kitchen, an' it's hopin' I am you'll kape that shoinin', too. An' then there's the coal to be got in an' the ashes to be took out. It does seem that iverything you bring in is the cause of somethin' to be took out, but it can't be helped, so it can't, so 'Out with it,' says I. An' there's the dishes to be washed an'—I hate to ask you, Pat, but do you think you could larn cookin' a bit?"

She looked at him anxiously. The boy met her look bravely.

"If you can work to earn it, 'tis meself as can cook it, I guess," he said.

"Jist loike your father, you are, Pat. He wasn't niver afraid of tryin' nothin', an' siven b'ys takes cookin'. An' to hear you say you'll do it, whin I've larnt you, of course, aises me moind wonderful. There's some as wouldn't do it, Pat. I'm jist tellin' you this to let you know

you're better than most." And she smiled upon him lovingly.

"If the most of 'em's that mean that they wouldn't do what they could an' their mother a-washin', 'tis well I'm better than them, anyway," returned Pat.

"Ah, but Pat, they'd think it benathe 'em. 'Tis some grand thing they'd be doin' that couldn't be done at all. That's the way with some, Pat. It's grand or nothin', an' sure an' it's ginerally nothin', I 've noticed."

A mile they went in silence. And then Mrs. O'Callaghan said: "As for the rist, you'll all go to school but Larry, an' him I'll take with me when I go a-washin'. I know I can foind thim in the town that'll help a poor widow that much, an' that's all the help I want, too. Bad luck to beggars. I'm none of 'em."

Pat did not respond except by a kindly glance to show that he heard, and his mother said no more till they drove in at the farm gate.

"An' it's quite the man Pat is," she

cried cheerily to the six who came out to meet them. "You'll do well, all of you, to pattern by Pat. An' it's movin' we'll be on Monday, jist as I told you. It's but a small place we've got, as Pat will tell you there. Close to the north side of the town it is, down by the railroad tracks, where you can see all the trains pass by day an' hear 'em by night; an' there's freight cars standin' about at all toimes that you can look at, an' they've got iron ladders on the inds of 'em, but you must niver be goin' a-climbin' on top of thim cars."

At this announcement Andy and Jim looked interested, and the eyes of Barney and Tommie fairly shone with excitement. The widow had accomplished her object. Her boys were favorably inclined toward the new home, and she slipped into her bedroom to shed in secret the tears she could no longer restrain.

CHAPTER II

Sunday dawned cold and blustering—a sullen day that seemed hardly to know which way was best to make itself disagreeable, and so tried them all. The stock had been removed. There was no work outside for the two oldest boys, no watching indoors by the hungry little brothers for Pat and Mike to be through milking, and feeding, and pumping water into the trough, so that they might all have breakfast together. Yes, there had been a little work. The two horses which, with the wagon, had been kindly lent them for their next day's moving were in the barn. Mike had fed and watered them, Pat had combed them, and both had petted them.

Many a time that day would Mrs. O'Callaghan slip out to stroke their noses and pat their glossy necks and say in a

choked voice, "Tim's horses! Tim's horses! and we can't kape 'em!" And many a time that day would she smooth the signs of grief from her face to go into the house again with what cheer she could to her seven sons, who were gathered listlessly about the kitchen stove. Many a time that day would she tell herself stoutly, "I'll not give in! I'll not give in! I've to be brave for eight, so I have. Brave for my b'ys, and brave for mesilf. And shall I fret more than is good for Tim's horses whin I know it's to a kind master they're goin', and he himsilf a helpin' us to-morrow with the movin'? The Lord's will be done! There's thim that thinks the Lord has no will for horses and such. And 'tis mesilf is thankful that I can't agree with 'em."

Occasionally, as the morning passed, one of the boys stepped to the window for a moment, for even to glance out at flying flakes and a wintry landscape was a relief from the depression that had settled down upon them all.

That was a neighborhood of churches. Seven or eight miles from any town, it was remarkable to see three churches within half a mile of each other. Small, plain buildings they were, but they represented the firm convictions of the United Brethren, the United Presbyterians, and the Methodists for many miles around. Now all these people, vary as they might in church creeds, were united in a hearty admiration for plucky little Mrs. O'Callaghan. They all knew, though the widow would not own it, that destitution was at her door. The women feared that in taking her boys to town she was taking them to their ruin, while the men thought her course the only one, since a destitute woman can hardly run a farm with only seven growing boys to help her. And for a day or two there had been busy riding to and fro among the neighbors.

The snow fell fitfully, and the wind howled in gusts, but every farmer hitched up and took his wife and children with him, and no family went empty-handed.

For every road to every church lay straight by the widow's door. Short cuts there were to be used on general occasions, but that morning there was but the one road. And so it fell out that by ten o'clock there was a goodly procession of farm wagons, with here and there a buggy, and presently the widow's fence was lined with teams, and the men, women, and children were alighting and thronging up the narrow path to Mrs. O'Callaghan's door. There was no merriment, but there was a kindly look on every face that was beautiful to see. And there were those between whom bitterness had been growing that smiled upon each other to-day, as they jostled burdens on the path; for every one carried something, even the children, who stumbled by reason of their very importance.

The widow looked out and saw the full hands, and her heart sank. Was she to be provided for by charity? She looked with her keen eyes into the crowd of faces, and her heart went up into her

throat. It was not charity, but neighborliness and good will she read there.

"I'd be wan of 'em, if somebody else was me, may the Lord bless 'em," she said as she opened wide the door.

In they trooped, and, for a moment, everybody seemed to be talking at once.

"For every one carried something."

It sometimes needs a great deal of talk to make a kind deed seem like nothing at all. Sometimes even a great deal of talk fails to do so. It failed to-day.

Tears were running unheeded down the widow's face. Not even her boys knew how everything was gone, and she left with no money to buy more. And everybody tried not to see the tears and every-

body talked faster than ever. Then the first church bell rang out, and old and young turned to go. There came a little lull as one after another gave the widow's hand a cordial clasp.

"My friends," said Mrs. O'Callaghan—she could be heard now—"my dear friends, I thank you all. You have made my heart strong the day."

"I call that a pretty good way to put in time on Sunday," said one man to another as they were untying their teams.

"Makes going to church seem worth while, for a fact," returned his neighbor.

Not till the last vehicle had passed from sight did the widow look round upon what her neighbors had left her, and then she saw sufficient pantry stores to last even seven growing boys for a month. And among the rest of her gifts she found coal for a week. She had not noticed her sons as she busily took account of her stock, but when she had finished she said, "B'ys, b'ys! 'tis your father sees the hearts of these good people this day and

rej'ices. Ah, but Tim was a ginerous man himsilf! It's hopin' I am you'll all be loike him."

That night when the younger boys were in bed and only Pat and Mike sat keeping her company, the widow rose from her seat, went to a box already packed and took therefrom an account book and pencil.

"They're your father's," she said, "but it's a good use I'll be puttin' 'em to."

Writing was, for the hand otherwise capable, a laborious task; but no help would she have from either of her sons.

"May I ask you not to be spakin'?" she said politely to the two. "It's not used to writin' I am, and I must be thinkin' besides."

Two hours she sat there, her boys glancing curiously at her now and then at first, and later falling into a doze in their chairs. She wrote two words and stopped. Over and over she wrote two words and stopped. Over and over until she had written two words and stopped fifty times. And

often she wiped away her tears. At last her task was done, and there in the book, the letters misshapen and some of the words misspelled, were the names of all who had come to her that morning. Just fifty there were of them. She read them over carefully to see that she had not forgotten any.

"Maybe I'll be havin' the chance to do 'em a good turn some day," she said. "I will, if I can. But whether I do or not, I've got it here in writin', that when all was gone, and I didn't have nothin', the Lord sint fifty friends to help me out. Let me be gettin' down in the heart and discouraged again, and I'll take this book and read the Lord's doin's for me. Come Pat and Moike! It's to bed you must be goin', for we're to move to-morrow, do you moind?"

CHAPTER III

According to Mrs. O'Callaghan's plans, the moving was accomplished the next day. There was but one load of household goods, so that the two teams of their kind neighbor made only one trip, but that load, with the seven boys and their mother, filled the shanty by the tracks to overflowing. The little boys immediately upon their arrival had been all eyes for the trains, and, failing them, the freight cars. And they had reluctantly promised never to ascend the iron freight car ladders when they had been in their new home only one hour.

"Whin you're dailin' with b'ys take 'em in toime," was the widow's motto. "What's the use of lettin' 'em climb up and fall down, and maybe break their legs or arms, and then take their promise?

Sure, and I'll take it before the harm's done, so I will."

Such tooting the delighted little fellows had never heard. "Barney!" whispered Tommie, in the middle of the night, with a nudge. "Barney! there's another of 'em!"

"And listen to the bell on it," returned Barney. "Ain't you glad we moved?"

And then they fell asleep to wake and repeat the conversation a little later. Larry was the only one who slept the night through. The rest were waked so many times by the unaccustomed noise that one night seemed like twenty.

"We'll be used to it in toime," said the heavy-eyed little widow to yawning Pat and Mike the next morning. "And the more things you get used to in this world the better for you. I belave it's quite something loike to be able to sleep with engines tootin' and blowin' off steam, and bells a-ringin', and cars a-bumpin'. Even a baby can slape where 'tis quiet, you know."

Breakfast had been over an hour. "Now, Pat," said his mother, "that's not the way to make beds. Off with them covers and make 'em over again."

Mrs. O'Callaghan was standing in the doorway and looking in at the roomful of beds. "I don't mane it for unkindness, Pat, but sure and the way you've got 'em made up they look jist loike pigs'nests with covers over 'em. There, that's better," she commented when Pat had obediently made all the beds over again under her instructions. "You can't larn all there is to bed-makin' in a day. 'Tis practice makes parfect, as your copy book used to say. But I'm thinkin' you'll have it in a week, for you're your father's son, and he was a quick wan to larn, was Tim. And now I'll be teachin' you a bit of cookin' while I have the chance. You must larn that as quick as you can, Pat, for a poor cook wastes a sight, besides settin' dishes of stuff on the table that none but pigs can eat. And in most places the pigs would get their messes, but here

we've got no pigs, and whativer you cook we've got to be eatin'. Andy was askin' for beans for to-morrow a bit ago. What 's your ideas about bakin' beans, Pat? How would you do it?"

Pat thought a moment. "I'd wash 'em good, and put 'em in a pan, and bake 'em," he said.

"Sure, then, you've left out one thing. With that receipt, Pat, you'd need a hammer to crack 'em with after they was baked. No, no, Pat, you pick 'em over good and put 'em a-soak over night. In the mornin' you pick 'em over again, and wash 'em good and bile 'em awhile, and pour off the water, and bile 'em again in fresh water with jist enough salt in it, and then you put 'em in the oven and bake 'em along with a piece of pork that's been a-bilin' in another kittle all the toime."

Pat looked a trifle astonished, but all he said was, "*Baked beans* is a queer name for 'em, ain't it?"

Mrs. O'Callaghan smiled. "That's the short of it, Pat, jist the short of it.

The names of things don't tell half there is to 'em sometoimes. And now for the dinner. It's belavin' I am you can cook it with me standin' by to help you out when you get into trouble."

Pat tied on a clean apron, washed his hands and set to work.

"That's it! That's it!" encouraged Mrs. O'Callaghan, from time to time, as the cooking progressed. "And I'll jist be tellin' you, Pat, you're not so green as some girls I've seen. I'd rather have a handy b'y as an unhandy girl any day."

A little later she stood in the shanty door. "Come, Moike!" she called. "Bring the little b'ys in to dinner. Pat's a-dishin' it a'ready."

Mike had been detailed by his prudent mother as a guard to prevent his small brothers from making too intimate acquaintance with freight cars and engines. He was by this time pretty hungry, and he marshaled in his squad with scant ceremony.

A week went by and the widow was

settled. Each boy was placed in his proper class at the public school, and the mother had her coveted four washing places.

"I didn't come to town to be foolin' my toime away, so I didn't," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, as she sat down to rest with a satisfied face. "Pat," she continued, "you've done foine with the work this week. All I've to say is, 'Kape on.' It'll kape you busy at it with school on your hands, but, sure, them as is busy ain't in mischief, nayther."

The next week all went well with the widow and Larry as usual, but the boys at school found rough sailing.

"Ah, but Mrs. Thompson's the jewel!" cried Mrs. O'Callaghan on Monday evening. "She do be sayin' that Larry's a cute little fellow, and she has him in to play where she is, and he gets to hear the canary bird sing, so he does. Didn't I be tellin' you, Pat, that I knew there was them in this town would help me that way? But what makes you all look so glum? Didn't you foind the school foine

the day? Niver moind! You ain't acquainted yet. And jist remember that iverybody has a deal to bear in this world, and the poor most of all. If anybody does you a rale wrong, come tell me of it. But if it's only nignaggin', say naught about it. 'Twon't last foriver, anyway, and them that's mane enough to nignag a poor b'y is too mane to desarve attintion, so they are."

The widow looked searchingly at her older sons. She saw them, under the tonic of her sound counsel, straighten themselves with renewed courage, and she smiled upon them.

"I'll niver be makin' Tim's b'ys weak-spirited by lettin' 'em tittle-tattle of what can't be helped," she thought.

"Now, b'ys, heads up and do your bist!" she said the next morning as she went to her work.

But it was one thing to hold up their heads at the shanty, and quite another to hold them up on the noisy, swarming campus where they knew nobody, and

where the ill-bred bullies of the school felt free to jeer and gibe at their poor clothing and their shy, awkward ways.

"Patrick O'Callaghan!" yelled Jim Barrows derisively.

It was recess and the campus was overflowing with boys and girls, but Pat was alone. "Just over from the 'ould coonthry'," he continued. "You can tell by his clothes. He got wet a-comin', and just see how they've shrunk!"

The overgrown, hulking fellow lounged closer to the tall and slender Irish boy, followed by the rough set that acknowledged him as a leader. Some measured the distance from the ends of Pat's jacket sleeves to his wrists, while others predicted the number of days that must elapse before his arms burst through the sleeves.

The spirit of the country-bred boy quailed before this coarse abuse, which he knew not how to resent. He glanced about him, but no way of escape offered. He was hemmed in. And then the bell struck. Recess was over. He thought

of his brothers in different grades from himself, though in the same building. "Is there them that makes it hot for 'em when they can?" he said anxiously to himself. "We'll have to be stayin' more together mornin's and noons and recesses, so we will."

But staying together did not avail. Jim Barrows and his set found more delight in tormenting several unresisting victims than they could possibly have enjoyed with only one.

"Ah, but this nignaggin's hard to stand!" thought Pat a week later. He was on his way to school. Pat was always last to get off on account of his work. That morning Jim Barrows was feeling particularly valiant. He thought of the "O'Callaghan tribe," as he called them, and his spirits rose. He was seventeen and large for his age. "Them low Irish needs somebody to keep 'em to their places," he said to himself, "and I'm the one to do it."

Just then he spied Andy a few steps

ahead of him, Andy, who was only eleven, and small and frail. Two strides of his long legs overtook the little boy. A big, ugly hand laid itself firmly on the shrinking little shoulder. Words of abuse assailed the sensitive ears, and were followed by a rude blow. Then Jim Barrows, regarding his duty done for that time, lounged on, leaving the little fellow crying pitifully.

A few moments later, Pat came along, and, finding his favorite brother crying, insisted upon knowing the reason. And Andy told him. With all the abuse they had borne, not one of the brothers had been struck before. As Pat listened his anger grew to fury. His blue eyes flashed like steel.

"Cheer up, Andy!" he said, "and run on to school. You needn't be afraid. I can't go with you; I've business on hand. But you needn't be afraid."

He had just ten minutes till school would call. Who was that, two blocks off, loitering on a corner? Was it? — it was Jim Barrows.

With a dogged step that did not seem hurried, Pat yet went rapidly forward. Straight up to the bully he walked and looked him firmly in the eye. "You struck my brother Andy because you thought you could," he said. And then, in the language of those Western boys, "he lit into him." "'Tis Andy's fist is on you now!" he cried, while he rained blows on the hulking coward, who did not offer to defend himself. "And there!" with a tremendous kick as Jim Barrows turned to run, "is a taste of his foot. Touch him again if you dare!"

"'Cheer up, Andy!' he said."

Needless to say, he didn't dare.

"I hear your brother Andy's been fighting," said the principal, as he stopped Pat the next day in the street. "At least,

there are marks of Andy's fist and Andy's foot on Jim Barrows." His eyes twinkled as he spoke and then grew grave again. "Fighting's a bad thing in general, but you are excusable, my lad, you are excusable."

Pat looked after the principal going with a quick firm step on his busy way, and thought him the finest man in town, for, so far, nobody had given the poor Irish boy a word of sympathy and encouragement.

That evening Pat ventured to tell his mother.

"And so that's what the principal said, is it?" commented Mrs. O'Callaghan. "He's a man of sinse. Your father was a man of great sinse, Pat. Fightin' is a bad thing, so it is. But your father's gone, and it's you must kape the little wans from harm in his place. You'd be but a bad brother to stand by and see any wan strike little Andy. There's some things has got to be put a stop to, and the sooner it's done the better, says I." Then

after a pause, "I hope you larn your lessons, Pat?"

"I do, mother."

"I thought you would. Your father always larnt all that come handy to him. Larnin's no load, Pat. Larn all you can."

Now Pat, with the exception of Latin, was no whit behind other boys of his age, for he had been sent to school in the country from the time he was five years old. The fight being over, he gave his mind thoroughly to his books, a thing he could not do while he did not know what to expect from Jim Barrows and his set, and his class-standing was high.

And now the first of April was at hand. The O'Callaghans had been a month in town and the widow was beginning to see that she had overestimated the purchasing power of what she could earn at four washing places. Four dollars a week needed a supplement. How could it be supplied? Mrs. O'Callaghan cast about in her mind. She had already discovered that Wennott

offered a poor field for employment, so far as boys were concerned, and yet, in some way, her boys must help her. By day, by night she thought and could hit upon nothing unless she took her sons from school.

"And that I'll not do," she said, "for larnin' is at the root of everything."

CHAPTER IV

Is Friday an unlucky day? You could not get Mrs. O'Callaghan to think so, for it was upon the Friday that closed a week of anxious thinking that Mrs. Brady called at the shanty. Neither could you get Mrs. Brady to think so, for—but let us begin a little farther back. Hired girls, as they were called in Wennott, were extremely scarce. Mrs. Brady was without one—could not get one, though she had advertised long and patiently. Now she was tired to exhaustion. Sitting in the old wooden rocker that had been Mr. O'Callaghan's, Mrs. Brady rested a few moments closely surrounded on all sides by the O'Callaghan furniture.

"'Tis a bit snug, ma'am," Mrs. O'Callaghan had said when piloting her to this seat, "but it's my belafe my b'ys don't

moind the snugness of it so much as they would if they was girls."

Mrs. Brady mechanically agreed.

The four walls of the kitchen were rather too close together to inclose a bed, a wash-bench, two tubs, a cooking stove, a table, seven Windsor chairs, the water pail, the cupboard, and the rocking-chair in which Mrs. Brady sat, and leave anything but a tortuous path for locomotion. The boys knew the track, however, and seldom ran up against anything with sufficient force to disturb it or their own serenity. But there was not a speck of dust anywhere, as Mrs. Brady noticed.

The widow's face was a little careworn and anxious as she sat close at hand in one of the wooden chairs listening to Mrs. Brady's explanation of her need of help.

"You have been recommended to me by Mrs. Thompson. Could you come to me to-morrow, Mrs. O'Callaghan? It will be a day of sweeping and general cleaning," she concluded.

The widow's countenance began to

brighten. She saw her way out of the difficulty that had been puzzling her.

"I can't come mesilf, she answered politely, "for what with my sivin b'ys I've my own work that can't be neglected. But my son, Pat, will do it for you. I'll come with him jist to get him started loike, for he's niver swept a carpet, though he swapes a bare floor ilegant."

Well, to be sure, Mrs. Brady was not overjoyed. But she saw it was Pat or nobody, and she was very tired. So she agreed to try him.

"And when will you have him come?" asked Mrs. O'Callaghan. There was no doubt expressed on the mother's face; no fear lest her son might not be able to please.

"At eight," responded Mrs. Brady. "I cannot be ready for him sooner."

"Then together we'll be there, you may depind."

And Mrs. Brady, on the whole dissatisfied, went on her way. "If that boy—Pat, I think she called him—can do house-

work satisfactorily, he's the only boy that I've heard of here that can," she thought.

The next morning when the two presented themselves, Mrs. Brady, after showing Mrs. O'Callaghan where to leave her wraps, led the way at once to her bedroom. "Perhaps you will just make my bed for me before you go, Mrs. O'Callaghan," she insinuated. "It has been properly aired and is ready."

"Oh, Pat will make it for you, ma'am," was the answer, and again Mrs. Brady yielded.

"Now, Pat, on with your blouse."

The two women waited while Pat untied the bundle he carried and put on a clean cotton blouse.

"'Twas his father's blouse, ma'am. A bit loose now, but he'll grow to it. He's very loike his father."

Mrs. Brady looked at the tall, slender boy wearing his father's blouse and his mother's apron, with an old straw hat on his head for a dust protector, and then at the mother watching his every movement with

loving eyes, and only anxious that he might give satisfaction. And all sense of incongruity vanished from her mind.

"Now, Pat, show the lady what you can do." And Pat obeyed as if he were five instead of fifteen. The dead father had trained his sons from their babyhood to yield implicit obedience to their mother. Deftly he set to work. He turned the mattress; he smoothed and tucked in each sheet and cover as he put it on; he beat up the pillows, and within ten minutes the bed was perfectly made. There was no need for Mrs. Brady to speak. She showed her surprise and delight in her face.

"I was thinkin' Pat could suit you, ma'am," smiled the mother. "And now, if you've more beds, maybe Pat had better make 'em before the dust of the swapin' is on him."

"I have no more this morning," responded Mrs. Brady courteously.

"Then, Pat, there's the broom." Then she turned to Mrs. Brady. "Now,

"Mrs. Brady looked at the tall, slender boy."

ma'am, what's your ideas about swapin'? There's them that says, 'Swape aisy and not be gettin' the wools off the carpet.' But them wools don't many of 'em come off the carpet. There's a plinty of 'em comes on bare floors that ain't swept regular. I says, 'A vigorous swapin' and no light brushin' except by a lady loike yoursilf as hasn't got strength.'"

"Those are my ideas, too," said Mrs. Brady as with an air of satisfaction she began to spread the dust covers over her bed.

All day Pat swept and dusted and wiped paint and window panes, and at night he went home with seventy-five cents in his pocket.

The widow was getting supper, but she worked mechanically, for her heart was in her ears, and they were listening for Pat's step. The brothers, stowed here and there in chinks between the pieces of furniture, watched with eager eyes their mother's movements, and sniffed the savory odors that escaped from a perfectly

clean saucepan in capable hands. But no boy lounged on the bed, nor even leaned against it, and no one sat in the father's chair. To sit there meant special honor at the hands of the family.

"And it's Pat will sit in the rocking-chair and rest himsilf this avenin'," cried Mrs. O'Callaghan, returning to her cooking from a brief trip to the door. "It's Pat'll be bringin' home money the night; honest money that he's earned."

The little boys appeared impressed, and on Mike's face came a look of determination that led his mother to say, "All in good toime, Moike. You're as willin' as Pat any day. I know that. And the way you look after the little b'ys, your father himsilf couldn't do better."

And then Pat came stepping in.

"Did she praise you, Pat?" cried the little woman as she dished up the supper. She was hungry for appreciation of her boy.

"She did that. She said, 'Patrick,

you're elegant help, and will you come again next Saturday?' "

"And what did you tell her?"

"I told her I would, and let that Jim Barrows keep a civil tongue in his head when he hears of it, or I'll be teaching him another lesson. He'll not be throwin' it up to me that it's girl's work I'm doin' if he knows what's best for him."

"Listen to me, Pat," said his mother, soberly. "I'll be tellin' you now my plans for you so you'll not be runnin' agin 'em. It's to be a gintleman you are, and gintlemen don't fight jist because some Jim Barrows of a fellow says tauntin' words to 'em. You had to kape him off Andy, but moindin' his impudence to yoursilf is another thing."

For the first time in his life Pat looked unconvinced of his mother's wisdom, and she went on soothingly, "But sure and I don't belave he'll be sayin' a word to you, Pat. And anyway you know how many of the blissid saints and angels was women

on the earth, and how it was their work to kape things clane and pleasant for them they loved. And that ain't a work to be ashamed of by girl or b'y."

The little boys busily eating had seemed not to notice. Only Mike had looked on with interest. But into all their hearts had sunk the lesson that gentlemen did not fight.

"Are we all to be gintlemen?" asked Barney looking up when his plate was quite empty.

"Ivery wan of you. What should your father's b'ys be but gintlemen and him the best man as iver lived?"

It was not to be expected that in any place service such as Pat's would be willingly done without, least of all in Wennott. The more Mrs. Brady thought of it, the smaller and more unsatisfactory did Saturday appear, and on Friday morning she went again to the shanty.

"And I hope you're not come to say you've changed your moind about wantin' Pat to-morrow," said Mrs. O'Callaghan

when civil greetings had been exchanged and Mrs. Brady sat once more in the rocker.

"In one sense I have changed my mind," answered Mrs. Brady with a smile. "I want Pat to-morrow, but I want him all the other days of the week, too."

The widow was silent. She had not planned so far as this. What would Pat say? Would he do it?

"I will give him his board and lodging and a dollar a week to help me Saturday and Sunday, and before and after school the other days of the week. Saturday he would have to work all day, of course, but Sunday he would have almost nothing to do," said Mrs. Brady. "The washing and ironing I put out," she added as Mrs. O'Callaghan still hesitated.

"You're very koind, ma'am," responded the widow after a pause. "I hope Pat 'll go to you. I'll ask him."

"What makes you think he might not like to come?" inquired Mrs. Brady, anxious in her turn.

"Well, you see, ma'am, 'tis girl's work entoirely you want him to do. And Pat's been put on and made fun of almost more than he can bear since we moved to Wennott. Sure and them b'ys—I'd call 'em imps, only they're big for imps, bein' bigger and stouter than Pat himsilf—they sets on him and foretells when his arms is goin' to burst through his sleeves and such as that, loike an almanac, ma'am. And him a-loikin' nice clothes as well as any one, only he can't get 'em because it's poor we are, ma'am. Not that there's anything wrong about that. 'Tis the Lord's will that it's so, and we're doin' our best with it. But Pat's young. He didn't mean to tell me of it, but his moind bein' full of it, it slipped out.

"Pat, he done as I told him, and come to you a-Saturday, and he'd kape on comin' Saturdays, but I can't tell him he must go out to service loike a girl, when I know what thim b'ys will have in store for him. I must jist ask him, do you see? And what he'll say, I can't tell. He's mighty brave.

Maybe he'll come. I've been tellin' him he's not to be lickin' that Jim Barrows if he is impudent to him."

"Does Pat fight?" asked Mrs. Brady doubtfully. "He seemed so amiable."

"And pleasant he is," cried the widow earnestly. "'Twas not for himsilf he fought, do you understand. 'Twas because Jim Barrows hurt Andy's feelin's and struck him besides. Andy's my third son, ma'am. He's only eleven, and not strong ayther. And Pat, he loves him better, I belave, than he does all the rest of the b'ys put together."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Brady with a relieved air.

"But havin' got a taste of makin' Jim Barrows kape off Andy has sort of got him in the notion of not takin' nothin' off him, do you see? But it's his father has a good influence over him yet. Tim's in his grave, ma'am, but it's meanin' I am he shall still rule his b'ys. And he does, too."

CHAPTER V

There was a certain part of Wennott which its own residents were wont to think was *the* part of town in which to live. Sometimes in confidence they even congratulated themselves over their own good fortune and commiserated the rest of the town who lived upon the flat lands.

The rest of the town were not discontented in the least. They thought northeast Wennott was a little far out, themselves. And it was a good three-quarters of a mile from the public square. But the knolls were not to be had any nearer, and those who owned them felt repaid for the walk it took to reach them. The places were larger, the air was fresher and sweeter, and there was only one knoll to rent among them all. Beyond the knolls were the northeast suburbs, built upon as flat land as any the town afforded, and farther on

stretched rolling prairie, picturesquely beautiful. It was upon one of the knolls that Mrs. Brady lived, in a square house of an old-fashioned build, having a hall running through the center with rooms on each side. It fronted the west. To the left, as one entered, was the dining-room; to the right, the parlor, whose always open folding doors made the pleasant sitting-room a part of itself. There was a bay window in the east end of the sitting-room, and one's first glance in at the parlor door from the hall always traveled past everything else to rest on the mass of green and blossoms in the bay window. For Mrs. Brady was an expert at floriculture. Here and there on the lawn, not crowded, but just where it seemed natural to find them, were rosebushes of different varieties that waited patiently all winter for the appreciation of their beauty which summer was sure to bring, and among them were some of the kinds Mrs. Brady had loved in the Eastern home of her girlhood.

One stepped out from the south door

of the sitting-room to find narrow beds for all sorts of summer blooms hugging the house, and looked about to see farther on occasional other beds. Everything was represented in her flower garden, from sweet alyssum and mignonette to roses and lilies, just as a little of all sweet qualities mingled themselves in her disposition. She was no longer young, and she had come to be quite frail.

" I hope he will come," she said as she let herself in at the front door.

From the shanty she had come the back way, a part of which followed the railroad track, and the walk had not been very long, but wearily she sank down to rest.

" He's such a handy boy," she thought. " If he shouldn't come ! "

And down at the shanty Mrs. O'Callaghan, as she washed vigorously for her boys, was thinking, too.

" It's wishin' I am 'twas avenin'," she cried at last, " and then 'twould be off my moind, so 'twould. I can't tell no more than nothin' what Pat'll be sayin'. And

what's worse, I can't tell what I want him to be sayin'. 'Tis the best I want him to be doin', but what's the best? If he don't go, there's a chance gone of earnin' what we need. And if he does go, I'll be at my wits' ends to kape him from settlin' that Jim Barrows. It's widows as has their trials when they've sivin b'ys on their hands, and all of 'em foine wans at that."

It was a very uncertain day. Cloud followed sunshine, and a sprinkle of rain the cloud, over and over again.

"Sure an' the weather an' me's as loike as two peas the day. We're nayther of us to be depinded on, so we ain't, not knowin' what we want. Look at my clothes not dryin' an' me a-frettin'. What's the use of it all? Let Pat do as he will, I'll think no more of it."

The little woman was capable. She could work; she could control her boys, though sometimes, when it seemed best, she could give control of them into their own hands, and she could govern her thoughts with some measure of success. So, casting her

worries behind her, she went about brightly and cheerily as if nothing of an anxious nature lay before her, amusing Larry with chatter suited to his years, and making him contented to stay indoors while she toiled. For Mrs. O'Callaghan was as young as her youngest child, and as old as her oldest. It was easy for the boys to get close to mother. Only once did her mind revert to the forbidden theme. Dinner was over and she stood watching Pat, who was fast disappearing on his way to school.

"There's toimes to be spakin', and toimes to be kapin' still," she said. "Niver a word must I be sayin' till the rest of 'em's abed, and it's hard waitin', so it is. It's my belafe that's what makes some b'ys so unruly—takin' 'em at the wrong toime. Sure and b'ys has their feelin's loike the rest of the world. Spake to 'em by their lone silves when you've aught to say to 'em. There's niver a man of 'em all, not even Gineral Brady himsilf, would loike bein' bawled at in a crowd about somethin' that needed thinkin' over. And Gineral

Brady's the foine man, too. Big and straight he walks, a-wearin' his plug hat, and old and young is plazed to meet him. Well, his business is done. There's no more foightin'. But he was a brave foighter! My Tim saw him at it more'n wanst. Tim was a long way behind the Gineral, but Tim, he done his duty, too. Sure some has to be behoind, and if that's your place, 'Make that place respicted,' says I."

She turned from the door and went back to her work.

"There's some as thinks the Gineral has a business," she went on. "There's them that calls him a banker. But what sort of a business is that now? Jist none at all. All he does is to take in the money, and put it in a safe place where nobody won't steal it, and hand it out again when it's needed, and lend a little now and then to somebody that wants it and is loikely to be payin' it back again. Anybody could do that. There's no work to it. And, by the same token, it's no business. When the

war was over, the Gineral's business was done, I say, and it's hopin' I am it'll soon be evenin', for I'm wantin' to hear what Pat'll say."

It was, in the main, a quiet supper at the shanty, and, for the most part, a silent evening. One by one the boys went to bed, and Pat and his mother were left alone.

"Pat," began Mrs. O'Callaghan, in a tremble of eagerness and apprehension, "who do you think was here the mornin'?"

"Sure and I couldn't guess, mother dear. You'll have to be tellin' me."

"And so I will," was the prompt reply. "'Twas Mrs. Gineral Brady, then. And she loikes your work that well, Pat, she wants you to go to her house to live."

At first the boy looked bewildered. Then a light of understanding flashed over his face, and he blushed as if with shame. To go out to service like a girl! He couldn't do it, and he wouldn't. But even in his fierce young indignation he restrained himself. He had suffered so

much of late that he was growing very careful about inflicting suffering upon others, especially upon his mother. He covered his eyes with his hand and sat quite still for a few moments before he inquired, "What did you tell her?"

"I told her I'd ask you, Pat. Only that." The boy wheeled round in the old Windsor chair in which he sat, threw his arms over the top of its back and buried his face. They had been in town now six weeks. Pat had learned by his experience in cooking how fast supplies went in a large family. Two weeks before, the generous contributions of their country neighbors had given entirely out, and Pat, as marketer, had learned how much money it took to buy with. Four dollars a week would not, could not, support the family even in summer time. Hard knowledge was this for a boy of fifteen to have, and hardly had it been learned. If he went, there was Jim Barrows and his set with more jeers and insults which he must not avenge. If he

did not go — all at once he remembered that ride home from Wennott with his mother, when he had asked her what he could do and what Mike could do to help. Was this the answer? Was he to live out like a girl, and Mike to take his place with the work at home?

He lifted his face, and his blue eyes had a pleading look that went to the widow's heart. "Mother, tell me what I must do," he said.

"I can't, Pat dear. You must say for yoursilf."

There was loving sympathy in look and tone, but the little woman's determination was clear. Pat must decide for himself. And the young head went down again.

Ten long minutes went by before Pat spoke again, and his voice had a muffled sound, for his face was not lifted. "Mother, are you willin'?" he asked.

"I am, Pat, my son."

Heavier the dreadful prospect pressed upon him. He could trust his mother, and she was willing. Then it must be right.

More minutes went by. Pat had a telltale voice. Clear and musical, it had ever revealed to the mother the heart of her son. And its sadness and submission smote upon her as he said at last, "You may tell her I'll go, mother."

"I always knowed you was brave, Pat," said Mrs. O'Callaghan. Then a rough little hand was laid on his head — the hand of an honest washerwoman — and in a reverent tone came the words, "Your father was brave."

The boy looked up gratefully. To be likened to his father was dear to him.

"Yes, Pat," went on Mrs. O'Callaghan. "'Most anybody can take a noice payin' job as suits 'em, but it's the brave wans that takes the work they don't want to do and does it good, too."

And then the mother who had the courage to battle cheerfully for her children, and the son who had the courage to do what seemed best in the face of contempt and ridicule, went to their rest.

CHAPTER VI

The next morning Pat stepped out into the kitchen and donned his apron in a downcast mood. The uplift of his mother's praise had passed, and the fact remained that to-day he was to go out to service like a girl. The little boys were up and stowed here and there waiting for breakfast. Some little boys cannot be kept in bed mornings as long as their elders could wish, and the widow's little boys were of that kind.

"Get up, if you want to," was Mrs. O'Callaghan's counsel to her youngest sons, "but see to it you don't get under Pat's feet. Nayther must you be runnin' out doors, for Moike to be haulin' you in when breakfast's ready."

These orders shut the little fellows into a narrow space, and they were always eager for the morning meal to be over.

Andy and Jim were not in such a hurry to rise, having reached the age when boys need a deal of persuasion to get them up.

"They'll be along in a minute," thought the widow. "Here comes Moike."

Along they were in a minute, as their mother had predicted. The little woman was fond of effect. "There's toimes when it's the thing to spake before 'em all," she thought. "This is wan of 'em. Pat needs heartenin' a bit."

"Pat donned his apron."

Then with an air of authority she said: "Pat, off with your apron!"

The rest were eyes and ears at once as their mother meant they should be, but Pat only stared in surprise. Some way he felt stupid this morning.

"Off with your apron," repeated Mrs.

O'Callaghan, "and sit you down in the father's chair. I get the breakfast this mornin'."

With a shamefaced blush Pat obeyed, amid the wondering looks of his brothers.

"You'll be sayin' farewell to Pat this mornin'," went on the widow, her glance traveling from one to another. "It's lavin' us he is to go to Gineral Brady's to live. 'Tis hard toimes we've been havin' and harder's before us. Pat seen it and he's a-goin' to help. He'll be gettin' his board and he'll still be goin' to school."

At this Pat started.

"Did you think I'd be willin' for you to lave school, my son?" asked the mother tenderly.

Then turning to the rest once more, "And it's a dollar a week he'll be gettin' besides. He's his father's son, and he's got a head older than his years, or he'd niver 'a' been the brave b'y he is, nor seen nothin' to be brave about, nayther. And he'll be comin' to visit us when Mrs. Brady can spare him, and that'll be when his work's

done, of course; and always he sits in his father's chair."

Redder and redder flushed Pat's cheeks, seeing which the widow adroitly drew the general attention to her second son.

"And here's the chance for Moike," she said, going busily on with her work. "Will you be makin' the beds and kapin' things shinin' and doin' the cookin' for us all?"

"You know I will, mother."

The little woman smiled. "Sure and I knowed you would. I jist asked you.

"Now, b'ys, there's what they call permotions. Often and often have I heard your father spake of 'em. We're havin' some of 'em this mornin'. Pat, he goes to earnin' money and his board. That gives Moike a chance to step up into his place, do you see? That's what permotions is for, I'm thinkin'—to give the wans behoind you a chance. Always step up when you honestly can, b'ys, if for no other reason, to give the wan behoind you a chance. There's no tellin' what he can do till he gets a chance, do you see? Tim, he

wouldn't 'a' stayed foightin' a private if the wan ahead of him had only done his duty and stepped up. But some folks niver does their duty, and it's hopin' I am you'll none of you be loike 'em. It's a noice place Pat's goin' to, so 'tis. There's a queer little house with a glass roof on jist across the street from it, and, by the same token, it's a wonder how they can kape a glass roof on it. There's them that can't even kape their window glass in, so there is, but goes a-stuffin' up the holes with what they can get. It's full of plants, so 'tis, a sort of a garden house where they sells flowers for weddin's and funerals and such, and maybe Pat'll be showin' you through it some day when he gets acquainted. I'm told anybody can see it. Grane house, I belave they calls it, but why anybody should call a garden house a grane house I can't tell, for sure and it's not a bit of a grane idea to sell flowers if you can find them that has the money to buy 'em."

At this, quiet little Andy, who was fond

of his book, glanced up. "Maybe they call it greenhouse because it's full of green things," he said.

The widow nodded two or three times in a convinced manner. "To be sure. That's the reason," she said. "And it's proud I am to have for my third son a b'y that can give the reasons of things. And there's another permotion we was forgettin'. Andy'll take Moike's place, so he will, and look after the little b'ys. A b'y that can give reasons can look after 'em wonderful, so he can, if he don't get so full of his reasons that he forgets the little b'ys entoirely. But Andy'll not be doin' that. I niver told you before, but your father's favorite brother was named Andy, and a great wan he was for reasons, as I've heard.

"Now breakfast's ready, so 'tis. I took my toime to it, for permotions always takes toime. There's them that wants permotion in such a hurry that they all but knocks over the wans in front of 'em. And that's bad, so 'tis. And no way at

all, nayther. Jist kape yoursilf ready to step, and when the toime comes step aisy loike a gintleman, and then folks rej'ices with you, instead of feelin' of their bumps and wonderin' at your impudence. And the worst of them koind of tryin's after permotions is that it hurts them behoind you, for they're jist a-breathin' aisy, do you see, when back you come a-tumblin' a-top of 'em, and lucky you are if you don't go past 'em, and land nobody knows where."

Seldom were the little boys so deluged with wisdom beyond their power of comprehension, but this was a special occasion, and as the general effect of the widow's remarks was to stir up in all a determination to do their best just where they were, her aim had been accomplished. Pat, in particular, was encouraged. Perhaps he was in line of promotion. He hoped it might come soon.

"Now, Moike," cried Mrs. O'Callaghan when Pat was gone, "here's a chance for you. It's lucky I am to be at home the

day. I'll be teachin' you a bit of all sorts, so I will, for you've everything to larn, Moike, and that's the truth, barrin' the lay of the tracks, and the switches, and the empty cars a-standin' about, and how to kape the little b'ys from hurtin' thimsilves."

Mike looked rather disheartened.

"You niver let 'em get hurted wanst, did you, Moike? And that's doin' well, too. I hope Andy'll be comin' up to you in that."

So encouragingly did his mother smile upon him as she said these last words that he visibly brightened. He was not tall and slender like Pat, but rather short and of a sturdy build. And he tied on his apron with determination in his eye.

"Do you know what you look loike, Moike?"

The boy glanced at her inquiringly.

"You look loike you was goin' to make short work of your larnin' and come up to Pat before you know it. I niver knowed a b'y to get the worst of it that looked that

way out of his eye. It's a sort of 'do it I will, and let them stop me that can' look, Moike dear. Not that anybody wants to stop you, and it's an ilegant look, too, as I've often seen on your father's face when he had a hard job ahead of him."

By this time Mike was ready for anything. He really knew more than his mother gave him credit for, having furtively watched Pat more than once.

"Well, well, Moike!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Callaghan when the last bed was made. "That's a sight better as Pat's first try at bed-makin'. If he was here he'd say that wasn't so bad nayther, and it's yoursilf as knows Pat's an ilegant bed-maker. If you'd seen him astonishin' Mrs. Gineral Brady you'd 'a' seen a sight now. I was proud that day."

Mike smiled with satisfaction and reached for the broom. His mother said nothing, but not a move escaped her critical eye. As far as the beds could be moved, they were moved, and around them

and under them went Mike's busy broom. Mike was warm-blooded, and it was a pretty red-faced boy that stood at last before his mother with the dustpan in his hand. There was strong approval on the little woman's face.

"Pat himsilf couldn't 'a' beat that. It's my belafe you've got a gift for swapin'," she said. "I can leave home to go to my washin' with an aisy mind, I see, and with no fears of chance callers foindin' dirty floors and mussy-lookin' beds a-disgracin' me. If widows is iver lucky, which I doubt, Moike, I'm lucky this far. I've got some wonderful foine sons, so I have."

Mike, at this, beamed with the consciousness that he was one of the sons and a fully appreciated one, too. A long time he had stood in the shadow of Pat's achievements. This morning he was showing what he could do.

"This permotion is pretty foine," said Mrs. O'Callaghan. "Moike, my b'y, you have stepped up aisy loike a gintle-

man into Pat's place, and now let's see you cook."

Mike looked crestfallen at once. "I can't cook, mother," he said. "Not the least in the world. Often and often I've watched Pat, but I never could get the hang of it."

The widow was silent a moment.

"Well, then!" she cried, "you've got the hang of bein' an honest b'y, and not pretindin' to do what you can't do, and that's better as bein' the best cook in the world. Niver do you pretind, Moike, not because there's always somebody about to foind you out, but because pretindin's mean. I'd have no pride left in me if I could think I had a pretindin' b'y about the house. And now, Moike, I'll teach you to cook. It's my belafe you can larn it. Why, Pat didn't know nothin' about it when he begun, and now he can cook meat and potatoes and such better as many a doless girl I've seen. You think Pat's cookin' tastes pretty good, don't you, Moike?"

"I do, mother," said Mike earnestly and without a tinge of jealousy in his tone. He loved and admired Pat with all his heart.

"You can larn it, too, if you only think so," encouraged Mrs. O'Callaghan.

"There's them that think's that cookin's a special gift, and they're right, too. But there's things about cookin' that anybody can attind to, such as havin' kettles and pans clean, and kapin' the fire up when it's needed, and not roastin' a body's brains out when it ain't needed. Yes, and there's other things," she continued with increasing earnestness. "There's them as thinks if they've a book or paper stuck about handy, and them a-poppin' down to read a bit ivery now and then, it shows that cookin's beneath 'em. And then the meat burns or it sogs and gets tough, the potatoes don't get the water poured off of 'em in toime, and things biles over on the stove or don't bile at all, at all, and what does all that show, Moike? Not that they're above cookin', but that they're lackin' in sinse.

For a sinsible person always pays attintion to what they're at, but a silly is lookin' all ways but the right wan, and ten to wan but if you looked inside their skulls you'd foind 'em that empty it would astonish you. Not that I'm down on readin', but that readin' and cookin' hadn't ought to be mixed. Now, Moike, if any of these things I've been tellin' you of happens to your cookin', you'll know where to put the blame. Don't say, 'I wasn't made to cook, I guess'. That's what I wanst heard a silly say when she'd burnt the dinner. But jist understand that your wits must have been off a piece, and kape 'em by you nixt toime. But what's that n'ise?"

She stepped to the door. A short distance off Jim was trying to get something away from Barney, who was making up in roars what he lacked in strength. Up went Mrs. O'Callaghan's hands to curve around her mouth and form a speaking trumpet.

"Jim, come here!" she called.

Jim began to obey, and his mother,

leaving Mike inside to think over her remarks on cooking, stood waiting for his lagging feet.

"Well, Jim," she said when he stood before her, "it's ashamed of you I am, and that's the truth. A big b'y loike you, noine years old, a-snatchin' something from little Barney and him only sivin! It's my belafe your father niver snatched nothin' from nobody."

At this Jim's countenance fell, for, in common with all his brothers, he shared a strong desire to be like his father.

"You may go now, but remember you'll be takin' Andy's place some day, a-carin' for the little wans."

The idea of taking Andy's place, even at so indefinite a period as sometime, quite took the edge off his mother's rebuke, and Jim went stepping off with great importance.

"Jim!" she called again, and the boy came back.

"That's a terrible swagger you've got on you, Jim. Walk natural. Your father

was niver wan of the swaggerin' sort. And jist remember that takin' care of the little b'ys ain't lordin' it over 'em naythe r."

CHAPTER VII

"If I'm goin', I may as well go," thought Pat as he left his mother's door on that mid-April Saturday morning. And away he went on the railroad track at a rapid pace that did not give him much time to think.

It was the General himself who answered his knock that had a strange mixture of the bold and the timid. The General had been listening for that knock. He had been wondering what sort of a boy it was who was willing to go out by the day to do housework. The knock told him. "He hates to come, but he comes, nevertheless," thought the General. And he arose and opened the door.

He looked into the boy's face and he saw a determined mouth and pleading eyes.

"Grit," thought the General. But he only said, "Come in, my boy."

"Yes, sir, if you please, sir, will you be tellin' Mrs. General Brady that I'm here, sir?" was Pat's answer as, with flushing cheeks, he stepped awkwardly into the room. What a fine soldierly bearing the General had, and how he must despise a boy who could turn himself into a girl!

"Sit down, Pat," said the General pleasantly. "That's your name, isn't it? I'll tell Mrs. Brady presently."

Pat sat down. He could not imagine the General with an apron on doing housework, though that was what he was trying to do while he sat there with cheeks that grew redder and more red.

"Mrs. Brady tells me you are excellent help, Pat," went on the General.

"Yes, sir," stammered Pat.

"Have you come to stay, or just for the day?"

The boy's eyes were almost beseeching as he answered, "I've come to stay, sir."

What would the General think of him now?

"I suppose you like housework, then?"

"No, sir," came the answer in a low tone. "But father's gone, and there's mother and the boys and there's no work for boys in Wennott unless they turn themselves into girls."

"Better turn into a girl than into a tough from loafing on the streets, Pat," said the General heartily, as he rose from his chair. "I'll tell Mrs. Brady you are here."

There was not so much in what the genial master of the house had said, but Pat's head lifted a little. Perhaps the General did not despise him after all.

"I've good news for you, Fannie," said the General as he entered the dining-room. "Your boy has come, and come to stay."

"Oh, has he? I'm so glad." And she smiled her pleasure. "He's such a nice boy."

"He's a brave boy," said her husband with emphasis. "That boy has the grit

of a hero. He may come into our kitchen for a time, but, please God, he shan't stay there. I know what he will have to take from those street boys for doing the best he can for his mother and younger broth-

"'I've good news for you, Fannie,' said the General."

ers and he knows it, too. I saw it in his face just now. The boy that has the moral courage to face insult and abuse deserves to rise, and he shall rise. But, bless me! I'm getting rather excited over it, I see." And he smiled.

"Perhaps, Tom, you could shield him

a little in the street," suggested Mrs. Brady.

"I'll do my best, my dear." And then the General went away to his bank, and Mrs. Brady went into the kitchen to see Pat.

Pat was sensitive. There was something in the General's manner as he left him, something in Mrs. Brady's tones as she directed him, that restored his self-respect.

"If only I never had to be goin' on the street till after dark, 'twouldn't be so bad," thought Pat. "But there's school, and there's Jim Barrows. I'll just have to stand it, that's what I will. Mother says I'm brave, but it's not very brave inside I'm feelin'. I'd run if I could."

But Pat was to learn some day, and learn it from the General's lips, that the very bravest men have been men who wanted to run and *wouldn't*.

At General Brady's there was light lunch at noon and dinner at five, which was something Pat had already become accus-

tomed to from having to do his own family cooking for the last six weeks. He was pretty well used to hurrying home the moment the afternoon session of school was over to prepare the meal of the day for his hungry brothers and his tired mother. On Monday, therefore, he came flying into the Brady kitchen at fifteen minutes of five. There was the dinner cooking, with no one to watch it. Where was Mrs. Brady? Pat did not stop to inquire. His own experience told him that that dinner needed immediate attention.

Down went his books. He flew to wash his hands and put on his apron. He turned the water off the potatoes in a jiffy. "Sure and I just saved 'em, and that's all!" he cried, as he put them to steam dry.

"I'll peep in the oven, so I will," he said. "That roast needs bastin', so it does."

He heard the General come in.

"There's a puddin' in the warm oven," he continued, "but I don't know nothin' about that. It's long since we've had pud-

din' at home. I'll just dress the potatoes and whip 'em up light. I can do that anyway, and give the roast another baste. It's done, and I'll be settin' it in the warm oven along with the puddin'. For how do I know how Mrs. Brady wants her gravy? Where is she, I wonder?"

"Why, Pat," said a surprised voice, "can you cook?"

"Not much, ma'am," answered Pat with a blush. "But I can sometimes keep other people's cookin' from spoilin'."

"Well said!" cried the General, who was determined to make Pat feel at ease. "Fannie, give me an apron, and I'll make the gravy. I used to be a famous hand at it in the army."

Pat stared, and then such a happy look came into his eyes that the General felt a little moisture in his own.

"How that boy has been suffering!" he said to himself.

"I was detained by a caller," explained Mrs. Brady. "The dinner would surely

have been spoiled if Pat had not come just when he did."

And then Pat's cup was full. He blushed, he beamed. Here was the General, the man whom his mother had held up to Pat's admiration, with an apron on, cooking! And Mrs. Brady said that he had saved the dinner.

"Let Jim Barrows say what he likes," he thought. "I'd not like to be eatin' any of his cookin'."

Cooking had risen in Pat's estimation.

"She asked me, 'Will you please not be nickin' or crackin' the dishes, Pat?' And says I, 'I'll be careful, Mrs. Brady.' But I wonder what makes 'em have these thin sort of dishes. I never seen none like 'em nowhere else."

Dinner was over and Pat was alone in the kitchen.

"But the General makin' the gravy was fine, and sure I never tasted no better gravy neither. I wish I could just be lettin' 'em know at home. Mike will have to be turnin' into a girl, too, one of

The General makes the gravy.

these days, and it might ease him a bit if he could know the General wasn't above cookin'. My mother said I'd be comin' to visit 'em when my work was done, if Mrs. Brady could spare me."

A half-hour later a trim-looking boy presented himself at the sitting-room door.

"Come in, Pat," invited the General, looking up from his paper with a smile.

Pat smiled back again, but it was to Mrs. Brady that he turned as he entered the room.

"Mrs. Brady, ma'am," he said, "the dishes are done and the kitchen made neat. Will you have me to be doin' something more for you this evenin'?"

"No, Pat," replied Mrs. Brady kindly. "Your work, for to-day, is done. You may take off your apron."

"Yes, ma'am. Would you kindly be lettin' me go home a little while then?"

Pat's look was eager but submissive.

"Certainly, Pat," was the reply. "Take the kitchen key with you."

"Thank you, kindly, ma'am," returned

Pat gratefully. And with another smile for the General, who had not resumed his reading, the boy left the room, and, shortly after, the house.

"Listen!" cried Mrs. O'Callaghan, with uplifted finger. And the rollicking talk about her ceased on the instant.

"'Tis Pat's step I hear outside, and here he is, sure enough. Now, b'ys, don't all of you be on him at wanst. Let him sit down in the father's chair."

Pat, feeling the honor paid him, and showing that he felt it, sat down. The little boys crowded around him with their news. Jim and Andy got as near to him as they could for furniture, while Mike looked at him from the farther side of the tiny room with a heart full of love and admiration in his eyes. They had not seen Pat since Saturday morning except at school that day, and that was not like having him at home with them.

"And how does your work come on?" asked his mother as soon as she could get in a word.

"Fine," said Pat. "'Tis an elegant place." Then, with an air that tried hard to be natural, he added, "The General himself made the gravy to-day."

"What!" exclaimed his mother. "The Gineral!"

"He did," said Pat. "He put on one of Mrs. Brady's aprons, and 'twas fine gravy, too."

The widow looked her astonishment. "And do you call that foine?" she demanded at last. "The Gineral havin' to make his own gravy? What was you a-doin', Pat?"

"I was helpin' Mrs. Brady with the puddin' sauce and dishin' up. 'Twas behind we all was, owin' to a caller, and Mrs. Brady said if it hadn't been for me the dinner would have been spoiled sure. I got there just in time."

"The Gineral," said Mrs. O'Callaghan, looking about her impressively, "is the handsomest and the foinest gintleman in the town. Iverybody says so. And the Gineral ain't above puttin' an apron on

him and makin' gravy. Let that be a lesson to you all. The war's over. You'll none of you iver be ginerals. But you can all make gravy, so you can."

"When, mother, when?" asked Barney and Tommie eagerly, who saw at once that gravy would be a great improvement on mud pies, their only culinary accomplishment at present.

"When?" repeated the widow. "All in good toime, to be sure. Pat will be givin' Moike the Gineral's receipt, and the b'y that steps into Moike's place—and that'll be Andy, I'm thinkin'—he'll larn it of Moike, and so on, do you see?"

"And I was just thinkin'," put in Pat, with an encouraging glance at Mike, "that Jim Barrows's cookin' was like to be poor eatin'."

"True for you, my b'y!" exclaimed the widow. "The idea of that Jim Barrows a-cookin' niver struck me before. But, as you say, no doubt 'twould be poor. Them that's not above nignaggin' the unfortunate is apt to be thinkin' themsilves

above cookin', and if they tried it wanst, no doubt their gravy would be a mixture of hot water and scorch, with, like enough, too little salt in it if it didn't have too much, and full of lumps besides. 'Tis your brave foightin' men and iligant gintlemen loike the Gineral that makes the good gravy."

CHAPTER VIII

"Pat, I forgot to give Mr. Brady the list of things that I want sent up this morning."

Pat looked up from his dishwashing sympathetically, for there was perplexity in the kindly tone and on the face no longer young.

It was always a mystery to the boy why Mrs. Brady called her husband "Mr. Brady" when everybody else said General Brady.

"But it's none of my business, of course," he told himself.

It was Saturday morning.

"Do you think you could go down, Pat, when the dishes are finished?"

"Indeed, and I can that, ma'am," returned Pat heartily.

"Do so, then," was the reply. And

Mrs. Brady walked away with a relieved air.

"I'm ready, ma'am," announced Pat, coming to the sitting-room door a little later. "Will you be havin' me to take the list to General Brady, or will you be havin' me to be doin' the buyin' myself?"

Mrs. Brady thought a moment. Her husband very much disliked marketing. If Pat should prove as capable in that direction as in every other, the General would be saved what was to him a disagreeable task. She resolved to try him. So she said, "You may do the buying yourself, Pat."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," answered Pat respectfully.

"Do you like to buy things?" asked Mrs. Brady, surprised at the expression of anticipated pleasure on the boy's face.

"I don't like nothin' better, ma'am. 'Twas but a taste I'd got of it before I left home. Mike does our buyin' now. Buyin's next best to sellin', we both think."

He took the list Mrs. Brady held out

and ran his eye over it. "I'll be takin' my basket and bring the little things home myself," he said. "Would you believe it, ma'am, some of them delivery boys is snoopy, I've been told. Not all of 'em, of course, but some of 'em just. Now raisins, you've got here. 'Raisins is mighty good, but let 'em buy their own,' says I. And don't you be doin' nothin' but restin', ma'am, while I'm gone. If I'm off enjoyin' myself 'tain't fair as you should be up here a-workin'. There's not much to be done anyway, but I'll get through with it," he ended with a smile.

Away went Pat, stepping jauntily with his basket on his arm. It was the first of June, and Wennott, embowered in trees, was beautiful. He had almost reached the square before he thought, "She never told me where to go. I can't be wastin' my time goin' back. I'll just step into the bank and ask the General."

Pat loved the General. A woman's apron was the bond that bound the poor Irish boy to the fine old soldier, and it

was with the smile that the boy kept exclusively for him that he stepped in at the open door of the bank.

The General was engaged, but he found time to answer the smile and to say in his most genial tone, "In a moment, Pat."

He was soon at liberty, and then he said, "Now, Pat, what is it?"

"Please, sir, have you any one place where you want me to be tradin', or am I to buy where the goods suit me?"

"Are you doing the marketing to-day, Pat?"

"Yes, sir. Mrs. Brady give me leave."

"And what is your own idea about trading?"

"Buy where you can do the best for the money, sir," was the prompt reply.

The banker looked at him thoughtfully. He had the key to Pat's future now. He knew along what line to push him, for he was determined to push Pat. And then he said, "Buy where you think best. But did Mrs. Brady give you money?"

"She did, sir. This creditin' is poor

business. Show 'em your money, and they'll do better by you every time."

The General listened in so interested a manner that Pat added, "It's because the storemen can get all the creditin' they want to do and more, too, but them as steps up with the cash, them's the ones they're after."

"And who taught you this, Pat?"

"Sure and my mother told me part of it, and part of it I just picked up. But I'll be goin' now, or Mrs. Brady will think I'm never comin'. She'll be teachin' me to-day to make a fine puddin' for your dinner."

The first store Pat went into had already several customers. As he entered, the clerks saw a tall boy wearing a blouse shirt and cottonade trousers, and having on his head a broad-brimmed straw hat well set back. And they seemed not at all interested in him. The basket on his arm was also against him. "Some greeny that wants a nickel's worth of beans, I suppose," said one.

But if the clerks seemed to make little of Pat, Pat, for his part, regarded them with indifference. The sight of the General making gravy had changed the boy's whole outlook; and he had come to feel that whoever concerned himself with Pat O'Callaghan's business was out of his province. Pat was growing independent.

Other customers came in and were waited upon out of their turn while Pat was left unnoticed.

"That's no way to do business," he thought, "but if they can stand it, I can." And he looked about him with a critical air. He was not going off in a huff, and perhaps missing the chance of buying to advantage for the General. At last a clerk drew near—a smallish, dapper young fellow of about twenty.

"I'll be lookin' at raisins," said Pat.

"How many'll you have?" asked the clerk, stepping down the store on the inside of the counter, while Pat followed on the outside.

"I said I'd be lookin' at 'em," answered

Pat. "I don't want none of 'em if they don't suit."

The clerk glanced at him a little sharply, and then handed out a sample bunch of a poor quality.

Pat did not offer to touch them.

"They'll not do," he said. "Have you no better ones? I want to see the best ones you've got."

"What's the matter with these?" asked the clerk quickly.

"And how can I tell what's the matter with 'em? They're not the kind for General Brady, and that you know as well as I."

At mention of the General's name the clerk pricked up his ears. It would be greatly to his credit if, through him, their house should catch General Brady's trade. He became deferential at once. But he might as well have spared his pains. No one, with Pat as buyer, would be able to catch or to keep the General's trade. Whoever offered the best for the money would sell to him.

The boy had the same experience in every store he entered, as he went about picking up one article here and another there till all were checked off his list.

"There's more'n me thinks the General's a fine man," he thought as he went home. "There didn't nobody care about sellin' to me, but they was all after the General's trade, so they was. And now I must hurry, for my work's a-waitin' for me, and the puddin' to be learnin' besides. Would I be goin' back to live off my mother now, and her a-washin' to keep me? Indeed and I wouldn't. The meanest thing a boy can be doin', I believe, is to be lettin' his mother keep him if he can get a bit of work of any sort."

With his mother's shrewd counsel backing him up, and with the General constantly before him to be admired and imitated, Pat was developing a manly spirit. When he went to live with Mrs. Brady, he had offered his mother the dollar a week he was to receive as wages.

"Sure and I'll not be takin' it, Pat," said the little woman decidedly.

Pat doing the marketing.

To-night he had come home again, and this time he had brought three dollars with him.

"I told you I'd not be takin' it, Pat, and I won't nayther." Though the widow would not touch the coin, she looked lovingly at her son and went on, "It's ginerous you are, loike your father, but you're helpin' me enough when you take your board off my hands. You must save your money to buy clothes for yoursilf, for you need 'em, Pat dear. Mrs. Brady can't be puttin' up with too badly dressed help. Now don't you be spakin' yet," she continued, as she saw him about to remonstrate. "It's a skame of my own I've got that I want to

be tellin' you about, for it's a comfort you are to me, Pat. Many's the mother as can't say that to her oldest son, and all on account of the son bein' anything but a comfort, do you see? But I can say it, Pat, and mean it, too. A comfort you are to me."

Pat smiled as he listened.

"Do you know, Pat," pursued his mother earnestly, "as I'm goin' to my washin' places, I goes and comes different ways whiniver I can, for what's the use of always goin' the same way loike a horse in a treadmill when you don't have to? Course, if you have to, that's different.

"Well, Pat, sure there's an awful lot of cows kept in this town. And I've found out that most of 'em is put out to pasture in Jansen's pasture north of the railroad. It runs north 'most to the cemetery, I'm told. But what of that when the gate's at this end? You don't have to drive the cows no further than the gate, Pat, dear. And the gate you almost passes when you're goin' to Gineral Brady's by the

back way up the track. It's not far from us, by no manes."

Pat's face expressed surprise. Did his mother want him to drive cows in addition to his other work?

"Now all these cows, Pat," continued his mother impressively, "belongs wan cow at a house. I don't know but wan house where they kapes more, and their own b'ys does the drivin', and that wouldn't do us no good. The pay is fifty cents a month for drivin' a cow out in the mornin' and drivin' it back at night, and them drivin' b'ys runs 'em till the folks, many of 'em, is wantin' a different koind of b'ys. Now what if I could get about ten cows, and put Andy and Jim to drive 'em turn about, wan out and the other back. Wouldn't that be a good thing? Five dollars a month to put to the sixteen I earn a-washin', and not too hard on the b'ys, nayther. Don't you think 'twould be a good thing, Pat?"

"I do, indeed, mother," answered the son approvingly.

"I knowed you would, and I belave your father would. How is it you come to be so like him, Pat, dear? The blessed angels know. But you're a comfort to me. And now will you help me to get the cows? If you could get a riference, I belave they calls it, from the Gineral, for we're mostly strangers yet. You can say you know Andy and Jim won't run the cows."

The reference was had from the General that very evening, though the old soldier could not help smiling to himself over it, and the first of the week found Andy and Jim trudging daily to and from the pasture.

It was not without something like a spirit of envy that Barney and Tommie saw Jim and Andy driving the cows.

"Mother, why can't we be goin', too?" teased Barney, while Tommie stood by with pouting lips.

"And what for would you be goin'?" asked the widow. "Most cows don't loike little b'ys. They knows, does the cows, that little b'ys is best off somewhere else

than tryin' to drive them about sayin,' 'Hi! hi!' and showin' 'em a stick."

The two still showing discontent, she continued: "But geese, now, is different. And who's to be moindin' the geese, if you and Tommie was to go off after the cows? Sure geese is more your size than cows, I'm thinkin', and, by the same token, I hear 'em a-squawkin' now. What's the matter with 'em? Go see. Not that anybody iver knows what's the matter with a goose," she ended as the little boys chased out of the shanty. "It's for that they're called geese, I shouldn't wonder."

CHAPTER IX

There is no whip to ambition like success. Every day the widow thought, and toiled, and kept her eyes open for chances for her boys. "For, after all," said she, "twenty-one dollars a month is all too small to kape six b'ys and mesilf when the winter's a-comin', and 'twon't be twenty-one then nayther, for cows ain't drove to pasture in winter."

It was the second son who was listening this time, and the two were alone in the shanty kitchen.

"The days is long, and I belave, Moike, you could do something else than our own housework, with Andy here to look after the little b'ys."

"Say what it is, mother dear, and I'll do it," cried Mike, who had been envying Pat his chance to earn.

"Well, then, to be telling you the truth, Moike, who should be askin' me if I knowed of a boy to kape his lawn clean this summer but the Gineral. Says I, 'I do, Gineral Brady. I'll be bold to say my Moike will do it.' So there I've promised for you, Moike, and you're to have a dollar a month."

The boy's delight at the prospect shone in his eyes and his mother went on, "Strong and hearty you are, Moike, and I've been thinkin' what's to hinder your gettin' other lawns with school out next week and nothin' to bother you."

The little woman looked tired and warm. She was just home from Thursday's wash, and she sat down wearily on one of the wooden chairs. Mike saw it, and, to the boy who would be fourteen the next day, there suddenly came a realizing sense of the stay his mother was to the family. He noted with anxiety the lines that were deepening on her face. "Sit in father's chair, mother dear," he coaxed. "'Twill rest you more."

The widow looked at him with a pleased expression creeping over her face.

"You're father and mother both, so you are. Sit in father's chair," persuaded Mike.

"No," she answered, as she rose and went over to the seat of honor. "Don't praise me too much. I'm jist your mother, doin' the best I can for you, though."

And she sat down and leaned her head against the back of the chair.

The sturdy figure of the boy began to move briskly about. He made up the fire and then he slipped out at the door and took an observation. No shade anywhere but at the east end of the shanty, where the building itself threw a shade. He hurried in again.

"Will you be gettin' up, mother dear, if you please?"

In surprise she stood up. The strong, young arms reached past her, lifted the chair, and then the boy began to pick his way carefully so as not to strike this treasured possession against anything.

"What are you doin', Moike?" asked Mrs. O'Callaghan in astonishment.

"I'm takin'—the chair—outside—where—there's a cool shade. 'Tis too hot—for you here where I'm cookin'."

He turned and looked back as he stood in the doorway. "Come, mother dear, and rest you in the cool."

"Moike! Moike!" cried the widow, touched by this attention. "'Tis what your father would have done if he was here. Always afraid he was, that I would be gettin' overtired or something. 'Tis sweet to have his b'y so loike him."

Mike's heart gave a great throb. He knew now the taste of that praise that kept Pat pushing ahead. "'Tis for Pat to lead—he's the oldest," he thought over his cooking. "But see if I don't be lookin' out for mother after this, and makin' it as easy for her as I can. I'd lug forty chairs ten miles, so I would, to have her praise me like that."

The next morning the widow rose still weary. The kitchen was uncomfortably

warm as a sleeping place now, but what could be done about it? Nothing.

"It's all there is, and I won't be sayin' a word about it, so I won't," she thought. "I'll jist tuck Larry in with Moike, and I guess I can stand it."

Wash day for the home. She hardly felt equal to her task.

Breakfast was over, but what was Mike doing? Not making his beds, nor washing his dishes. He had put on and filled the boiler. Now he was carrying out wash bench and tubs to the west side of the shanty. The west was the shady side of a morning. In he came again—this time for the father's chair.

"'Tis an iligant breeze there is this mornin'," he cried. "Come out, mother, dear, and sit in father's chair. You've got a wash boy this mornin', so you have, and he'll need a lot of showin'."

He reached for the washboard as he ceased, and smiled lovingly on his mother.

"Moike! Moike!" cried Mrs. O'Callaghan in a trembling tone, "'tis sweet to

be took care of. I hain't been took care of since your father died."

"Then 'tis time you was!" answered Mike. "And I'm the boy to do it, too. Come out, mother dear."

And the mother went out.

"But there's your housework, Moike."

"That can wait," was the positive reply.

"But there's your schoolin'."

"I'm not goin' to school to-day. I know my lessons. I learnt 'em last night. Will I be goin' to school and sittin' there all day, and you all tired out a-washin' for us? I won't that."

"Moike, 'twas your father was dreadful headstrong when he set out to be. It's fearin' I am you're loike him there."

But the happy light in her eyes was reflected on the face of her son as he answered: "It's wantin' I am to be like him in everything, headstrong and all. I'm not goin' to school to-day."

"And you needn't, Moike. I'll be ownin' to you now I didn't feel equal to the washin', and that's the truth."

Mike nodded and went gayly into the house for warm water and the clothes.

"There's more than one kind of a boy needed in a house," he said to himself. "With seven of us mother ought to have 'em of all kinds. I'm the one to be aisin' her. I'm built for it." And he rolled up his shirt sleeves over his strong, muscular young arms.

"Now be careful," began Mike's first lesson in washing, "and don't waste the soap and your strength a-tryin' to get the dirt out of the places that ain't dirty. Rub where the rubbin's needed, and put the soap where it's wanted. That's it. You're comin' on foine." And the widow resumed her seat.

For a few moments she sat silent in thought. Then she said: "Do you know what's the matter with this town, Moike? All the b'ys in it that wants to work at all wants to do somethin' aisy, loike drivin' a delivery wagon. Though the way they drive 'em ain't so aisy on the horses, nayther. There's a lesson for you, Moike.

Them that's so aisy on themsilves is the very wans to be hard on iverything and iverybody. Them that's got snail's feet of their own can't get a horse to go fast enough for 'em, specially when the horse belongs to somebody else. And I'm jist a-gettin' my courage up, Moike. I belave there'll be always something for my b'ys to do, because my b'ys will *work*. And if they can't get b'ys' work they'll do girls' work. Betwane you and me, Moike, I'm proud of Pat. Have you heard the news? When school closes he's to have two dollars a week, and three afternoons out all summer. And what do you think Mrs. Brady says? She says she hain't had such help since she lived in the East. She says she's restin', and she feels ten years younger. That's your brother's work, Moike,—makin' a lady like Mrs. Gineral Brady feel ten years younger. If there's aught to be ashamed of in that, sure 'twould take a ninny to find out what it is. I'll warrant them delivery b'ys' horses ain't feelin' ten years younger, anyway."

Mike's face showed that he relished his mother's talk; seeing which, she went on: "You're doin' foine, Moike. Do you know there was a girl wanst set to washin', and she had it in her moind to do a good job, too. The first thing she got hold of was a pillow case with lace on the ind of it—wide lace. And what does she do but lather that clean lace with soap and put in her best licks on it, and all to no purpose at all only to wear the lace to strings, and then, don't you think, she quite skipped the body of the case where the head had been a-layin'."

Mike laughed.

That night as the widow and her boys sat outside the door in the cool, quick steps came down the track, crunching the slack and cinders that filled the spaces between the ties. It was Pat who was coming, and his face was anxious.

"What ails you, mother dear?" he cried lovingly.

"Why, nothin', Pat, only I've got some sons that spoils me, so I have, a-makin'

much of me. 'Tis a dreadful complaint, ain't it? But there's mothers as is not loike to die of it." And she laughed half tearfully. She had been nearer breaking down that morning than she would admit, and her nerves were still a little unsteady.

"Andy told me at recess Mike was stayin' home to wash, and I didn't know what to think. I've been worryin' about it ever since, and the minute my work was done I come a-flyin' to see."

"You needn't worry no more, Pat. Sure, and I thought when the chance come for you to go to Mrs. Gineral Brady 'twas because the Lord saw our need. And that was it, no doubt, but there's more to it, Pat. You went that I might foind out what koind of a b'y Moike is. You moind what I told you about permotions, Pat? 'Twas your steppin' up that give Moike his chance to show what he could do. And Moike was ready for it. Chances don't do nobody no good that ain't ready for 'em. Andy there is a-watchin', I know."

The frail little fellow smiled. There was

some light on the group, thrown from the electric light tower, but not enough to show the wistfulness of the boy's face, and the widow burned no oil in summer. Privately, Andy was afraid chances would not do him much good.

"Why," continued the widow, "even the little b'ys, Barney and Tommie, was a-watchin' the other day for chances. 'Twas them that wanted to be takin' the job of drivin' the cows from Andy and Jim, and leavin' their geese to do it, too. There's big b'ys, I'm thinkin', that's after cows when geese would be better suited to 'em."

Barney and Tommie were drowsing, but Jim blushed. He knew that reproof was meant for him. Mrs. O'Callaghan had been thinking about her fourth son to-day in the unaccustomed leisure given her by Mike.

"How it is I don't know," she mused, "but he do have a wonderful knack at rilin' up the little b'ys, and he'd iver be doin' somethin' he can't do at all. I'll be lookin' into Jim's case. There shan't

wan of Tim's b'ys be sp'iled if I can help it."

"It's time you was goin', ain't it, Pat?" suggested Mike.

At this breach of hospitality the widow was astounded. Mike to speak like that!

For a second Pat seemed hurt. "I could have stayed half an hour longer, but I'll go," he said, rising.

"And I'll go with you a ways!" exclaimed Mike, jumping up very promptly.

Pat's farewells were said and the two were off before Mrs. O'Callaghan had recovered herself enough to remonstrate.

"I wanted to be talkin' to you, Pat, and I didn't want mother to hear. That kitchen's too hot for her to sleep in, and that's the truth."

"But there ain't no other place," answered Pat anxiously.

"No," returned Mike triumphantly. "There ain't no other place for mother to sleep, but there is a place we could put the stove, and that's outside."

"What in?" inquired Pat gloomily.

"What in? In nothin', of course. There's nothin' there. But couldn't we stick in four poles and put old boards across so's the stove would be covered, and run the pipe out of a hole in the top?"

"We might," returned Pat, "but you'll have to make up your mind to get wet a-cookin' more days than one. All the rains don't come straight down. There's them that drives under. And you'd have to be carrying the things in through the wet when you got 'em cooked, too."

"And what of that?" asked Mike. "Do you think I care for that? What's me gettin' wet to makin' mother comfortable? There's July and August comin' yet, and June only begun."

Pat looked at his brother admiringly, though the semi-darkness did not permit his expression to be seen.

"We'll do it!" said he. "I'll help you dig the holes for the posts and all. We'll begin to-morrow evenin'. I know Mrs. Brady will let me come when my work's done."

CHAPTER X

The next morning Pat went about with a preoccupied air. But all his work was done with his accustomed dispatch and skill, nevertheless.

"What is on my boy's mind?" thought Mrs. Brady. Yes, that is what she thought —"*my* boy."

And just then Pat looked into the sitting-room with his basket on his arm. "I'll just be doin' the marketin' now, ma'am," he said.

"Very well," smiled Mrs. Brady. "Here's a rose for your buttonhole. You look very trim this morning."

Pat blushed with pleasure, and, advancing, took the flower. The poor Irish boy had instinctively dainty tastes, and the love of flowers was one of them. But even before the blossom was made fast, the preoccupied look returned.

"Mrs. Brady, ma'am, would you care if I stopped at the lumber yard while I'm down town? I'd like to be gettin' some of their cheapest lumber sent home this afternoon."

"Why, no, Pat. Stop, of course."

Pat was encouraged. "I know I was out last night," he said. "But could I be goin' again this evenin' after my work's done? Mike's got a job on hand that I want to help him at."

"Yes, Pat."

"You see, ma'am," said the boy gratefully, "we're goin' to rig up something to put the cook-stove in so as mother will be cooler. It's too hot for her sleepin' in the kitchen."

Mrs. Brady looked thoughtful. Then she said: "You are such a good, dutiful boy to me, Pat, that I think I must reconsider my permission. Lunch is prepared. You may go home as soon as you have finished your marketing and help Mike till it is time to get dinner. We will have something simple, so you need not

be back until four this afternoon, and you may go again this evening to finish what remains to be done."

"Mrs. Brady, ma'am," cried Pat from his heart, "you're next to the General, that's what you are, and I thank you."

Mrs. Brady smiled. She knew the boy's love for her husband, and she understood that to stand next to the General in Pat's estimation was to be elevated to a pinnacle. "Thank you, Pat," she replied. Then she went on snipping at the choice plants she kept in the house, even in summer, and Pat, proudly wearing his rose, hurried off.

But when Pat arrived at home and hastened out behind the shanty, the post-holes were dug. Mike had risen at three o'clock that morning, dug each one and covered it with a bit of board before his mother was up.

"And have you come to say you can't come this evenin'?" asked Mike, as Pat advanced to where he was sorting over such old scraps of boards as he had been permitted to pick up and carry home.

"I've come to get to work this minute," replied Pat, throwing off his blouse and hanging it on the sill of the open window, with the rose uppermost.

"Where'd you get that rose?" inquired Mike, bending to inhale its fragrance.

"Mrs. Brady give it to me."

"Mother would think it was pretty," with a glance at his older brother.

"And she shall have it," said Pat. "But them boards won't do. I've bought some cheap ones at the lumber yard, and they're on the way. And here's the nails. We'll get that stove out this day, I'm thinkin'. I couldn't sleep in my bed last night for thinkin' of mother roastin' by it."

"Nor I, neither," said Mike.

"Well, let's get to diggin' the holes."

"They're dug."

"When did you dig 'em?"

"Before day."

"Does mother know?"

"Never a word."

Pat went from corner to corner and peered critically down into each hole.

"You're the boy, Mike, and that's a fact," was his approving sentence.

Just then the boards came and were thrown off with a great clatter. Mrs. O'Callaghan hurried to the door. "Now, b'ys, what's the meanin' of this?" she questioned when the man had gone.

"Have my rose, mother dear," said Pat.

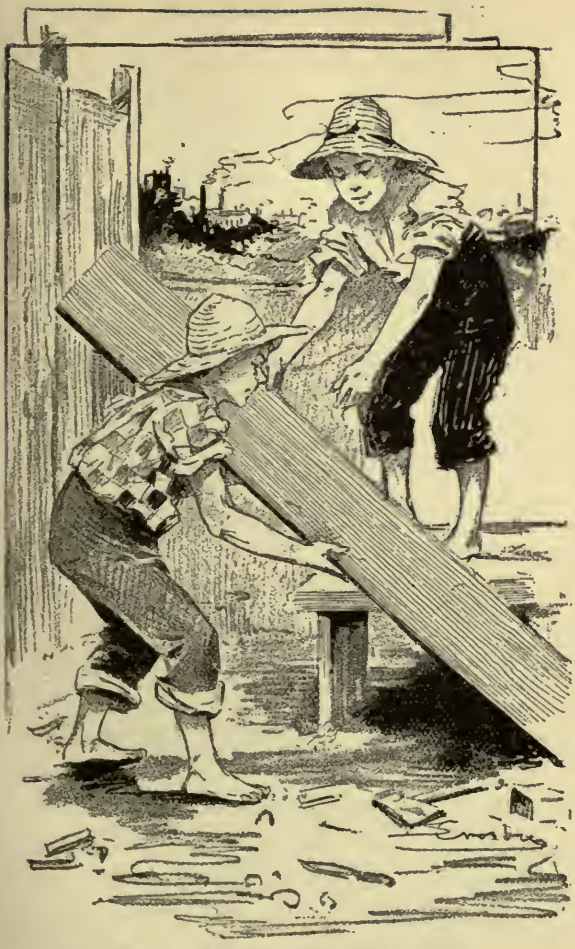
"And it's a pretty rose, so it is," responded Mrs. O'Callaghan, receiving it graciously. "But it don't answer my question. What'll you be doin' with them boords?"

"Now, mother, it's Mike's plan, but I'm into it, too, and we want to surprise you. Can't you trust us?"

"I can," was the answer. "Go on with your surprise." And she went back into the shanty.

Then the boys set to work in earnest. Four scantlings had come with the boards, and were speedily planted firmly.

"We don't need no saw, for the boards are of the right length, so they are. A



Pat and Mike building the kitchen.

man at the yard sawed 'em for me. He said he could as well as not. Folks are mighty good to us, Mike; have you noticed?"

"The right sort are good to us, of course. Them Jim Barrows boys are anything but good. They sets on all of us as much as they dares."

By three o'clock the roof was on, and the rough scraps Mike had collected were patched into a sort of protection for a part of the east side of the new kitchen.

"Now let's be after the stove!" cried Mike.

In they went, very important.

"Mother, dear, we'd like to be takin' down your stove, if you'll let us," said Pat.

The widow smiled. "I lets you," she answered.

Down came the stovepipe to be carried out. Then the lids and the doors were taken off to make the heavy load lighter. And then under went the truck that Andy had run to borrow, and the stove was out.

Mrs. O'Callaghan carefully refrained from looking at them, but cheerful sounds came in through doors and windows as the big boys worked and the little ones crowded close with eager enjoyment of the unusual happening. Presently there came tones of dismay.

"Pat," said Mike, "there's no hole to run the pipe through. What'll we do?"

"We'll have to be cuttin' one, and with a jackknife, too, for we've nothin' else. But I'll have to be goin' now. I was to be back by four, you know."

"Then we'll call the mother out and show her the surprise now," said Mike. "I'll make short work of cuttin' that hole after you're gone."

"Will you be steppin' out, mother dear?" invited Mike gallantly.

"You'll not be roastin' by the stove no more this summer," observed Pat.

The widow came out. She looked at the rough roof supported by the four scantlings, and then at her boys.

"Sure, 'tis a nice, airy kitchen, so it is,"

she said. "And as for the surprise, 'tis jist the koind of a wan your father was always thinkin' up. As you say, I'll not be roastin' no more. But it's awful warm you've made my heart, b'ys. It's a warm heart that's good to have summer and winter." And then she broke down. "Niver do you moind me, b'ys," she went on after a moment. "'Tis this sort of tears that makes a mother's loife long, so 'tis."

"Well, Mrs. Brady, ma'am, we're done," reported Pat at a few minutes before four. "Mike, he'd got up and dug all the holes before day, and it didn't take us so long."

"And is the stove out?" inquired Mrs. Brady kindly.

"It is, ma'am. Mike will be cookin' out there this evenin'. Mike's gettin' to be the cook, ma'am. I show him all I learn here, and he soon has it better than I have myself."

Mrs. Brady smiled. How Mike could do better than Pat she did not see, but she could see the brotherly spirit that made Pat believe it.

"Perhaps you had better go over again this evening," she said, "just to see if the stove draws well in the new kitchen."

"Do you mean it, ma'am?" asked the boy eagerly.

"Yes."

"Thank you, kindly. I'd like to go, but I wasn't goin' to ask. My mother says askin's a bad habit. Them that has it is apt to ask more than they'd ought to many times."

Meanwhile, up on the roof of the new kitchen in the hot afternoon sun sat Mike with his knife. He had marked out the size of the pipe-hole with a pencil, and with set lips was putting all the force of his strong, young arms into the work. A big straw hat was on his head—a common straw, worth about fifteen cents. Clustered below were the little boys.

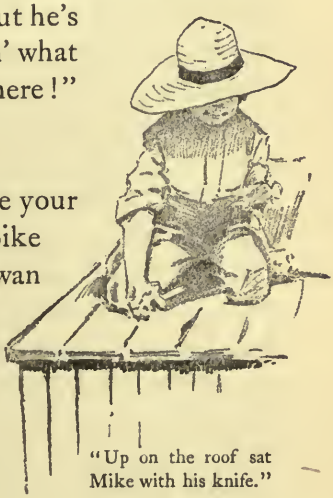
"No, you can't come up," Mike had just said in answer to their entreaties. "The roof won't bear you."

"'Twould bear me, and I could help you cut the hole," said Jim.

"There goes Jim again," soliloquized the widow. "Wantin' to cut a round hole in a boord with a knife, when 'tis only himself he'd be cuttin', and not the boord at all. It's not so much that he's iver for doin' what he can't, but he's awful set against doin' what he can. Jim, come here!" she called.

Jim obeyed.

"You see how loike your father Pat and Moike and Andy is, some wan way and some another. Do you want to be loike him, too?"



"Up on the roof sat Mike with his knife."

Jim owned that he did.

"Well, then, remimber your father would niver have been for climbin' to the roof of the new kitchen and cuttin' a round hole in a boord with a knife so as to run the pipe through when he was your soize. But he would have been for huntin' up

some dry kindlin' to start the fire for supper. So, now, there's your job, Jim, and do it good. Don't come back with a skimpin' bit that won't start the coal at all."

With lagging steps Jim set off to the patch of hazel brush north of the shanty to pick up such dry twigs as he could. His mother gazed after him.

"Tim left me a fortune when he left me my b'ys, all but Jim," she said, "and see if I don't make something out of him, too. Pat and Moike and Andy—showin' that you sense what they're doin' is enough for 'em. Jist that will kape 'em goin' foine. But Jim, he'll take leadin' with praise and shovin' with blame, and he'll get both of 'em from me, so he will. For sure, he's Tim's b'y, too, and will I be leavin' him to spoil for want of a harsh word now and then? I won't that. There's them in this world that needs settin' up and there's them that needs takin' down a peg. And wanst in a while you see wan that needs both of 'em, and that's Jim, so 'tis. Well, I know it in toime, that's wan thing."

Jim made such slow progress that the hole was cut, the pipe run through, and Mike was beginning to look about for his own kindling when he made his appearance.

"Well, Jim," said his mother, taking him aside, "there's something the matter with your feet, I'm thinkin', you've been gone so long. You was all but missin' the chance of seein' the first fire started in the new kitchen. There's something to remimber—seein' a sight loike that—and then you have it to think about that it was yoursilf that provided the kindlin' for it. All this you was on the p'int of losin' through bein' slow on your feet. Your father was the spriest koind of a b'y, I'm told. Only show him an errand, and he was off on it. Get some spryness into your feet if you want to be like your father, and run, now, to see Moike loight the fire. And don't be reachin' to take the match out of his hand, nayther. Your toime of fire buildin' will come."

Away went Jim. He was certainly spry enough now. Mike was just setting the

blazing match to the kindling when he reached the group around the stove. At the front stood the little boys, and in a twinkling Jim had pushed them one this way, one that, in order to stand directly in front of the stove himself.

"There he goes again," sighed the widow. "'Tis a many pegs Jim will have to be took down, I'm thinkin'."

CHAPTER XI

It was the last day of August that Pat went walking down to do his marketing with a jubilant air. Next week school was to begin, and with the beginning of the term he had expected to go back to his old wages of a dollar a week. But that morning Mrs. Brady had told him that he was still to have two dollars.

"And me goin' to school?" asked the boy in surprise.

"Yes, Pat. You have come to be very skillful about the house and you are worth it."

"I wasn't thinkin' about gettin' skillful, ma'am, so as to have my wages raised," was the earnest answer. "I was just thinkin' how to please you and doin' my best."

Mrs. Brady was touched. "You have

pleased me, Pat, and you have pleased Mr. Brady, too. We both take a great interest in you."

"Do you, ma'am? Then that's better than havin' my wages raised, though it's glad of the raise I am, too, and thank you for it. 'Twill be great news to be takin' home the next time I go."

But Pat was to take home greater news than that, though he did not know it as he went along with all the light-heartedness of his race. The sight of the tall, slender boy with his basket on his arm had grown familiar in the streets of Wennott. He was never left waiting in the stores now, and nothing but the best was ever offered him. Not only did the grocers know him, but the butchers, the poulterers, and even the dry goods merchants. For he often matched silks and wools for Mrs. Brady, and he had been known to buy towels of the common sort. A group of loafers shrugged their shoulders as he passed them this morning, and fell to repeating anecdotes of his shrewdness when certain deal-

ers had tried to sell him poor goods at market prices.

"There's nobody in this town ever got ahead of him yet on a deal," said one. "He's so awful honest."

"Bein' square himself, he won't take nothin' but squareness from nobody, and while he's lookin' out for his own chances he looks out for the other fellow's, too. Times and times he's handed back nickels and dimes when change wasn't made straight," contributed a second.

"There's two or three store men in town got their eye on him. They don't like to say nothin', seein' he's cookin' at General Brady's, but if he ever leaves there, he'll have pick and choice. Yes, sir, pick and choice," concluded a third.

At that very moment a dry goods merchant of the west side of the square was in the bank talking to General Brady. "I might as well speak," Mr. Farnham had thought. "If I don't get him, somebody else will." What the loafers had said was true.

"General," began Mr. Farnham, after the two had exchanged greetings, "I dislike to interfere with your family arrangements, but I should like to have Pat in the store this fall. I'll give him fifteen dollars a month."

The General smiled. "Fifteen dollars is cheap for Pat, Mr. Farnham. He's no ordinary boy."

"But that's the regular price paid here for beginners," responded Mr. Farnham. "And he'll have a great deal to learn."

"Have you spoken to him yet?"

"No, I thought I would speak to you first."

"Well, Mr. Farnham, Mrs. Brady and I some time ago decided that, much as we should like to keep Pat with us, we would not stand in his way when his chance came. I think this is his chance. And I don't doubt he'll come to you."

After a little further talk between the two General Brady said: "There is another matter I wish to mention. Mrs. O'Callaghan has set her heart on having

Pat graduate from the public school. He could do so easily in another year, but with his strong mercantile bent, and taking into consideration the struggle his mother is obliged to make to keep him there, I don't think it best. For, while Pat supports himself, he can do nothing to help at home. I ask you to give him one evening out a week, Mr. Farnham, and I will direct his reading on that evening. If I can bring him up and keep him abreast of the times, and prevent him from getting into mischief, he'll do."

"I shouldn't think he could accomplish much with one evening a week, General," objected Mr. Farnham, who did not wish to give Pat a regular evening out. An occasional evening was enough, he thought.

"Oh, yes, he can," insisted the General. "The most of his reading he will do at odd minutes, and that evening will be chiefly a resumé and discussion of what he has gone over during the week."

"You must take a strong interest in the boy, General."

"I do. I don't mind telling you privately, Mr. Farnham, that I mean to push him. Not by charity, which, to the best of my belief, not an O'Callaghan would take, but by giving him every opportunity in my power to advance for himself."

"In other words, you mean to protect the boy's interests, General?"

"I do. As I said before, fifteen dollars a month is cheap for Pat. I suppose he is to have, in addition, his one evening a week?"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Farnham, reluctantly.

"Thank you," said the General, courteously.

General Brady had intended to keep his news from Pat until the next morning, but it would not keep. As the boy, with his spotless apron on, brought in the dinner and stood ready to wait at table, the old soldier found the words crowding to the tip end of his tongue. His keen eyes shone, and he regarded with a most kindly gaze the lad who, to make life a little easier for

his mother, had faced jeers and contempt and had turned himself into a girl—a kitchen girl. It was not with his usual smoothness, but quite abruptly, that he began: "Pat, you are to leave us, it seems."

Pat so far forgot his manners as to stop and stare blankly at his employer.

"Yes, Pat. You are going into Mr. Farnham's store this fall at fifteen dollars a month."

If anything could have more endeared him to the General and his wife it was the way in which Pat received this, to him, important communication. He looked from one to the other and back again, his face radiant with delight. The born trader was to have an opportunity to trade.

And then his expression sobered. "But what will Mrs. Brady be doin' without me?" he cried. "Sure she's used to me now, and she's not strong, either."

"Perhaps Mike would come," suggested Mrs. Brady.

"He'll be glad to do it, ma'am!" ex-

claimed Pat, his joy returning. "'Tis himself that thinks its first the General and then you, just as I do."

"I hope you may always think so," said Mrs. Brady, smiling.

"Sure and I will. How could I be thinkin' anything else?"

And then the meal went on.

That evening, by permission, Pat went home. He sang, he whistled, he almost danced down the track.

"And it's Pat as is the happy b'y this evenin'," said Mrs. O'Callaghan. "Listen to him singin' and whistlin', first wan and then the other. Gineral Brady's is the place for any one."

The family were sitting in the kitchen, for the evening was a trifle cool. But the windows were open and there was a lamp burning.

"He's got some good news, I guess," remarked quiet Andy.

The mother gave him a quick glance. "Andy," she said, "you're the b'y as is different from all the rest, and a comfort

you are, too. 'Tisn't ivery family has a b'y as can hear good news when it's comin'."

And then Pat came in. His eyes were ablaze, and his wide mouth wore its most joyous smile. He looked round upon them all for one second, and then, in a ringing voice, he cried: "Mother! Oh, mother, it's to Mr. Farnham's store I'm to go, and I'm to have fifteen dollars a month, and the General is going to help me with my books, and Mrs. Brady wants Mike to go to her!"

It was all out in a breath, and it was such a tremendous piece of news that it left them all gasping but Larry, who understood not a thing but that Pat had come, and who stood waiting to be noticed by the big brother. For a full moment there was neither speech nor motion. Then the widow looked slowly round upon her sons. Her heart was full of gratitude to the Bradys, of pride in Pat, of exultation over his good fortune, and, at the same time, her eyes were brimming with tears.

" B'ys," she said at last, " I wasn't looking for permotions quite so soon again. But I belave that where they've come wanst, they're loikely to be comin' again, if them that's permoted lives up to their chances. Who's been permoted in Mr. Farnham's store, I can't say. But sure Pat, he steps up, and Moike steps into the good place Pat has stepped out of, and gives Andy his chance here at home. There's them that says there's no chances for anybody any more, but the world's full of chances. It's nothin' but chances, so 'tis. Sure a body don't want to be jerked from wan thing to another so quick their head spins, and so chances come along pretty middlin' slow. But the world's full of 'em. Let Andy wanst get larned here at home, and you'll be seein' what he'll do. Andy's not so strong as some, and he'll need help. I'm thinkin' I'll make a team out of him and Jim."

" I don't want to be helpin'. I want to be doin' mesilf," objected Jim.

"And what will you be doin'?" asked

the widow. "You're full short for spreadin' bedclothes, for though nine years makes a b'y plinty big enough for some things, it laves him a bit small for others. You can't be cookin' yet, nor sweepin', nor even loightin' fires. But you shall be doin', since doin's what you want. You shall wipe the dishes, and set the table, and do the dustin', and get the kindlin', and sure you'll be tired enough when you've all that done to make you glad you're no older and no bigger. Your father, when he was noine, would have thought that a plinty for him, and so it's a plinty for you, as you'll foind. You're quite young to be permoted that high," went on his mother, seeing a discontented expression on the little fellow's face. "Only for the big b'ys gettin' ahead so fast, you wouldn't have no chance at all, and folks wouldn't think you much bigger than Barney there, so they wouldn't. B'ys of nine that gets any sort of permotion is doin' foine, let me tell you. And now's your chance to show Moike that you can kape the dishes

shinin', and niver a speck of dust on anything as well as he could himsilf."

Jim straightened himself, and Mike smiled encouragingly upon him. "You can do it, Jim," he said with a nod.

And Jim decided then and there that he would do it.

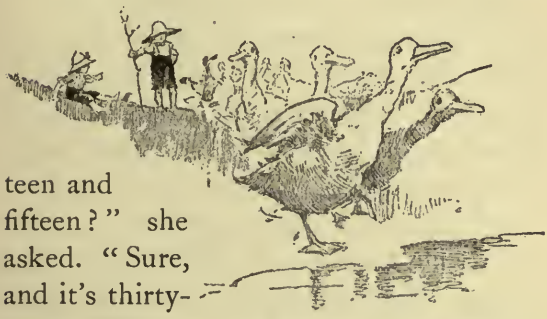
"I'll be lookin' round when I come to visit you all from Mrs. Brady's, and I expect to be proud of Jim," added Mike.

And Jim increased his determination. He wanted to have Mike proud of him. Very likely Mike would not be proud of the little boys. There was nothing about them to be proud of. "He shall be proud of me," thought Jim, and an important look stole over his face. "He'll be tellin' me I'm the b'y, I shouldn't wonder."

And now the widow's mind went swiftly back to the General. "Sure, and it's a wonderful man he is," she cried. "Your father was jist such a man, barrin' he was Irish and no Gineral at all. 'Twas him that was at the bottom of your gettin' the place to Mr. Farnham's, a-trustin' you to

do all the buyin' so's folks could see what was in you. It's sorry I am about the graduation, but the Gineral knows best, so he does."

Then her thought turned to the finances of the family. "And how much is six-



"Barney and Tommie a-takin' care of the geese."

teen and fifteen?" she asked. "Sure, and it's thirty-wan. Thirty-wan dollars a month for us this winter, and Moike takin' care of himself, to say nothin' of what Moike has earned with the lawn mower. 'Blessin's on the man that invented it,' says I, 'and put folks in the notion of havin' their lawns kept neat, 'cause they could do it cheap.' And there's what Andy and Jim has made

a-drivin' the cows, and Barney and Tommie a-takin' care of the geese. Wennott's the town for them as can work. And bad luck to lazy bones anyway. It's thankful I am I've got none of 'em in my family."

She paused a moment in reflection.

"Them geese now is foine. Do you think, Pat, the Gineral and Mrs. Brady would enjoy eatin' wan of 'em when it's a bit cooler? You knows what they loikes by this time."

"I think they would, mother."

"Then it's the best of the lot they shall have. Bad luck to them that's always a-takin' and niver wantin' to be givin' back."

CHAPTER XII

The fall term opened and found Mike the head of the O'Callaghan tribe, as the brothers had been jeeringly called by the Jim Barrows set. And Mike was a good head. The sort of boy to impress others with the good sense of minding their own business. His blue eyes had a determined look, as he came on the campus the first morning of the new term, that made his old persecutors think it best to withhold such choice epithets as "Biddy," "Kitchen Girl," and "Scrub Maid," which they had laid up for him. For they knew that it was Mike who now did housework at General Brady's. They had never seen Mike fight. He had always stood back and let Pat lead. But there was something in his erect and independent bearing on this autumn morning that made it very evident to the school

bullies that if Mike did not fight it was not because he could not.

"Them O'Callaghans think they're some since General Brady picked 'em up," commented Jim Barrows, safely out of Mike's hearing.

"General Brady had never heard of them when Pat gave you a licking, Jim, or don't you remember?" asked Bob Farnham, who was passing.

"Say, Jim," advised a crony, as the two sauntered off together, "we'd better let them O'Callaghans alone. I don't like the looks of that Mike. 'Twasn't any wonder that Pat licked you, for you're not much on the fight anyway. But I tell you, I wouldn't like to tackle that Mike myself. He's one of them pleasant kind that's a regular tiger when you stir him up."

"He's been runnin' lawn mowers all summer," observed Jim reflectively. "I reckon he's got his muscle up. Don't know but we had best leave him alone."

"Let me tell you, Jim, 'twon't do just

to let him alone. We've got to let 'em all alone—Andy and Jim and Barney and Tommie—or he'll light into us same as Pat did into you."

"Why can't a fellow do just his own fightin'," grumbled Jim Barrows, "and let the kids look out for themselves?"

"Some of 'em can, but the O'Callaghans ain't that kind. Touch one, touch 'em all, as you'd ought to know, Jim."

"Oh, shut up! You needn't be throwin' up that lickin' to me every minute. I was surprised, I tell you. Astonished, as I might say. I wasn't lookin' to be pitched into by a low down Irish boy."

"Oh, wasn't you?" queried his friend ironically. "Well, you keep on a-hectorin', and you'll be surprised again, or astonished, as you might say. That's all."

Jim Barrows had not looked into Mike's eye for nothing. He knew for himself the truth of all his companion had been saying, and from that hour the little boys had peace.

That same Monday was the most ex-

citing and important day of his life to Pat. He saw other clerks lagging along without interest, and he wondered at them. Hitherto, in all transactions, he had been a buyer. Now he was to sell.

Farnham's store was on the west side of the square—a fair-sized room—but rather dark, and not the best place in the world to display goods. It was not even the best place in Wennott, the storerooms of both Wall and Arnold being newer and better fitted. But displaying goods was not Pat's affair that morning. It was his part to display a clean floor and well-dusted shelves and counters to the first customer.

Mr. Farnham came in at the hour when he had usually found his other boy through with the sweeping and dusting, and Pat was still using the broom. His employer, seeing the skillful strokes of the broom, wondered. But he was soon enlightened. Pat was not giving the middle of the floor a brush out. He was sweeping thoroughly into every corner where a broom could find entrance. For Pat knew nothing of "brush

outs," though he knew all about clean floors. Every little while he stopped, swept up his collection into the dust-pan and carried it to a waste box in the back of the store. Mr. Farnham watched his movements. "He's business," he commented to himself. "Neither hurry nor lag."

At last Pat was through. One of the clerks came in, and she stared to see the shelves still wearing their dust curtains. But Pat was unconcerned. He had never opened a store before, nor seen one opened. He had been told to sweep out and dust, and he was obeying orders. That was all he was thinking about.

The sweeping done, Pat waited for the little dust that was flying to settle. Then he walked to the front end of the store and began to unhook the dust curtains. Very gingerly he took hold of them, being careful to disturb them as little as possible. Mr. Farnham and the girl clerk watched him. Every other boy had jerked them down and chucked them under the counter in a jiffy. Out went Pat with

them to the rear door, gave them a vigorous shaking, brought them back, folded them quickly and neatly, and then, turning to Mr. Farnham said, "Where will you have 'em, sir?"

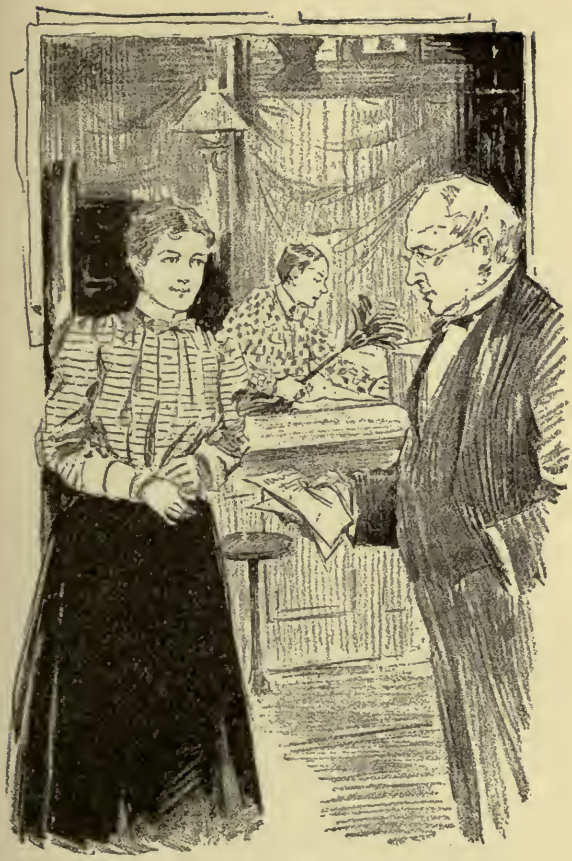
In silence Mr. Farnham pointed out a place, and then handed him a feather duster, showing him, at the same time, how to fleck the dust off the edges of the bolts of goods along the shelves, and also off the counter.

"This thing's no good for the glass show cases, sir. I'd ought to have a soft cloth. Something to take the dust up with, sir."

The merchant turned to the girl clerk. "Cut him off a square of cheesecloth, Miss Emlin, please," he said.

"Ordinary boy!" exclaimed Mr. Farnham to himself and thinking of the General. "I should say he wasn't. But cleaning up a store and selling goods are two different things."

It was a very small place that was given to Pat in the store that day—just the cal-



"The merchant turned to the girl clerk."

icoes, ginghams, and muslins. And Pat was dissatisfied.

"'Tisn't much of a chance I've got," he murmured to himself. "Gingham—that's for aprons, and calico—that's for dresses, and muslin—that's for a lot of things. Maybe I'll sell something. But it looks as if I'd be doin' nothin', that's what it does."

He thought of the home folks and how his mother's mind would be ever upon him during this his first important day. "Maybe I'm a bit like little Jim—wantin' to do what I can't do. Maybe geese are my size," and he smiled. "Well, then I'll tend to my geese and tend 'em good, so I will."

He began emptying his calico tables upon the counter. Mr. Farnham saw him from the desk, and walked that way at once. "What's the matter, Pat?" he inquired.

"Sure I'm just gettin' acquainted with the goods, sir. I was thinkin' I could sell better, if I knew what I'd got. I'll put

'em back, sir, when I've looked 'em over."

And entirely satisfied with his newest clerk, though Pat did not suspect it, Mr. Farnham returned to his writing.

Pat had often noticed and admired the way in which the dry goods clerks ran off a length of goods, gathered it in folds, and held it up before the customer.

"If I thought nobody was lookin', I'd try it, so I would," he said to himself.

He glanced around. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention. Pat tried it, and a funny affair he made of it. Mr. Farnham, who was only apparently busy, had to exert all his will power to keep back a smile. For Pat, with the fear of observers before his eyes, unrolled the web with a softness that was almost sneaking; he held up the length with a trembling hand and a reddening cheek; and, putting his head on one side, regarded his imaginary customer with a shamefaced air that was most amusing.

Pat seemed to feel that he had made

himself ridiculous. He sighed. "There's too much style to it for me yet," he said. "I'll just have to sell 'em plain goods without any flourishes. But I'll do it yet, so I will, only I'll practice it at home."

"And what did you be sellin' to-day, Pat dear?" asked his mother when at half-past nine he entered the kitchen door. She would not ask him at supper time. She wished to hear the sum total of the day's sales at once, and she had prepared her mind for a long list of articles.

"Well, mother," answered Pat drawing a long breath, "I sold two yards and a half of gingham."

The widow nodded. But Pat did not go on.

"And what else, Pat dear?"

"Nothin' else, mother."

Mrs. O'Callaghan looked astonished. "That's little to be sellin' in a whole day," she observed. "Didn't you sell no silks and velvets and laces?"

"I'm not to sell them, mother."

"And why not?" with a mystified air.

"Sure and I don't know. I've just the calicoes and the ginghams and the muslins."

"Ah!" breathed the widow. And she sat silent in thought a while. The small lamp on the pine table burned brightly,

"Mrs. O'Callaghan looked astonished."

and it lit up Pat's face so that with every glance his mother cast at him she read there the discouragement he felt.

"Pat dear," she began presently, "there's beginnin's in all things. And the beginnin's is either at the bottom or at wan ind, depindin' which way you're to go. Roads has their beginnin's at wan ind and runs

on, round corners, maybe, to the other ind. Permotions begin at the bottom. You moind I was tellin' you 'twas loikely there was permotions in stores?"

Pat gazed at his mother eagerly. "Do you think so, mother?"

"I think so. Else why should they put the last hand in to sweepin' out and sellin' naught but ginghams and calicoes and muslins? And will you be tellin' me what the b'y that swept out before you is sellin'?" continued the little woman, anxious to prove the truth of her opinion.

"Sure and he ain't sellin' nothin'," responded the son. "He ain't there."

"And why not?" interrogated Mrs. O'Callaghan.

"I'm told he didn't do his work good."

Mrs. O'Callaghan looked grave. "Well," she said, "there's a lesson for them that needs it. There's gettin' out of stores as well as gettin' in, so there is. And now, Pat, cheer up. 'Tis loikely sellin' things

is a business that's got to be larned the same as any other."

"Well, but, mother, I know every piece I've got, and the price of it."

"Can you measure 'em off handy and careless loike, so that a body wonders if you ain't makin' a mistake, and measures 'em over after you when they gets home, and then foinds it's all roight and trusts you the nixt toime?"

Pat was obliged to admit that he could not.

"And can you tie up a bundle quick and slick and make it look neat?"

Again Pat had to acknowledge his deficiency.

His mother regarded him with an air of triumph. "I knowed I could put my finger on the trouble if I thought about it. You've got it in you to sell, else Mr. Farnham wouldn't have asked for you. But he wants you for what you can do after a while more than for what you can do now. Remimber your beds and your cookin', Pat, and don't be bakin' beans by

your own receipt down there to the store. It's a foine chance you've got, so 'tis. Maybe you'll be sellin' more to-morrow. And another thing, do you belave you've got jist as good calicoes and ginghams and muslins to sell as there is in town?"

"Yes, mother, I know I have."

"Then you've got to make the ladies belave it, too. And it won't be such a hard job, naythe r, if you do your best. If they don't like wan thing, show 'em another. There's them among 'em as is hard to plaze, and remimber you don't know much about the ladies anyhow, havin' had to do only with your mother and Mrs. Gineral Brady. And there's different sorts of ladies, too, so there is, as you'll foind. It's a smart man as can plaze the half of 'em, but you'll come to it in time, if you try. Your father had a great knack at plazin' people, so he had, Pat. For folks mostly loikes them that will take pains for 'em; and your father was always obligin'. And you are, too, Pat, but kape on at it. Folks ain't a-goin'

to buy nothin', if they can help it, from a clerk that ain't obligin'. Sellin' goods is pretty much loike doin' housework, you'll foind, only it's different."

CHAPTER XIII

"Pat," said his mother the next morning at breakfast, "what's that book you used to be studyin' that larns you to talk roight?"

"Grammar, mother."

"Well, then, your studyin' has done you small good, for you talk pretty much the way I do mysilf, and niver a bit of that book did I be larnin' in my loife. It don't make a bit of difference what you know, if you don't go and *do* what you know. But you're not too old to begin over again, Pat, and practice talkin' roight. Roight talkin' will help you in the store. You've got in, and that's only half of it, for you'll not stay in if you don't do your best. And that's why helpin' a body don't do so much good after all."

Pat blushed, and the widow felt a little compassion. She threw increased confi-

dence into her tone as she went on. "Not as anybody thinks you won't stay, Pat, for, of course, you'll do your best. But about your talkin'—you'll need somebody to watch you close, and somebody that loves you well enough to tell you your mistakes koindly, and Andy's the b'y to do it. He's the wan among you all that talks roight, for he loves his book, do you moind."

And now it was Andy's turn to blush, while the widow smiled upon him. "I hear a many of them grammar folks talk," she said, "and it's mysilf that sees you talk jist loike 'em, barrin' the toimes when you don't. And them's not so many, nayther."

At this little Jim scowled scornfully, but of him his mother took no notice as she looked around with pride upon her sons.

"And it's proud I am to be havin' all sorts of b'ys in my family, barrin' bad wans," she continued. "I'll jist be tryin' to larn a little better ways of talkin' mysilf, so I will, not as I think there's much chance for me, and, as there's no good of waitin' till you get as old as Pat, Jim,

you'll be takin' heed to Andy's talkin'. Andy's the talker as would have plazed his father, for his father loiked everything done roight, so he did."

It was pleasant to see Andy's sensitive face glow with delight at being thus publicly commended by that potentate of the family, his mother. Mrs. O'Callaghan saw it. "And did you think I wasn't noticin' because I didn't say nothin'?" she asked him.

Then turning to the rest, "B'ys, you mostly niver knows what folks is a-noticin' by what they says—that is, to your face—but you sometoimes foinds out by hearin' what they've been sayin' behoind your back. And, by the same token, it's mostly bad they says behoind your back."

"I don't want to be larnin' from Andy," interrupted Jim. "He's but two years older than me anyway."

The widow eyed him severely. "Well, Jim, is it bigger and older than Pat you are? Pat's goin' to larn from Andy. And is it older than your mother you are, that's

forty years old? Sure I'm goin' to larn from Andy."

But Jim still appeared rebellious.

"Some of these days little Barney and Tommie and Larry will be set to larn from you. Take care they're not set to larn what not to do from lookin' at you. 'Tis Andy that's got the gift ne'er a wan of us has, and he'll show us how to profit by it, if we has sinse. It's thinkin' I am your father, if he was here, would not have been above touchin' up his own talkin' a bit under Andy's teachin'. Your father was for larnin' all he could, no matter who from, old or young."

Now the widow might have talked long to Jim without affecting him much, but for one thing. She had said that Andy had a gift that all the rest lacked. He resolved from that moment that he would talk better than Andy yet, or know why.

A pretty big resolve for so young a boy, but Jim could not endure to yield the supremacy to Andy in anything. Pat and Mike he was content to look up to, but

Andy was too near his own age, and too small and frail to challenge Jim's respect.

That morning Jim said little, but his ears were open. Every sentence that Andy spoke was carefully listened to, but the little fellow went to school not much enlightened. He could see the difference between his speech and Andy's, but he could not see what made the difference. And ask Andy he wouldn't.

"I'll be askin' the teacher, so I will," he thought.

That morning at recess, a small, red-headed, belligerent-looking boy, with a pair of mischievous blue eyes, went up to Miss Slocum's desk. But the eyes were not mischievous now. They were very earnest as they gazed up into his teacher's face.

"Plaze, ma'am, will you be sayin': I'll be larnin' it yet, so I will?"

Miss Slocum was surprised. "What did you say, Jim?" she asked.

"Plaze, ma'am, will you say: I'll be larnin' it yet, so I will?"

Miss Slocum smiled, and obligingly repeated, "I'll be larnin' it yet, so I will."

"No," said Jim. "That's the way I said it. Say it right."

"Say it right!" exclaimed Miss Slocum.

"Yes, say it like the grammar book."

"Oh," said Miss Slocum wonderingly. "I *will* learn it yet. Is that what you wanted?"

"Yes, ma'am. Will you be tellin' me some more when I want to know it?"

"Certainly," responded the gratified teacher, whereat Jim went away satisfied. He smiled to himself knowingly, as he caught sight of Andy at a distance on the campus. "I'll not be askin' him naythe r," he said. "I *will* learn it yet."

As for Pat, he went to the store that same morning a trifle disconsolate. He was fond of trade, but he knew almost nothing of dry goods; and here was his mother counseling him to improve his speech, and holding up to him the warning that his own inefficiency might lose him his place.

"Well, I know how to sweep and dust,

anyway," he thought as he unlocked the store door, went in and took up his broom. As thoroughly as before he went over everything, but much more quickly, not having the accumulated shiftlessness of former boys to contend with. And Mr. Farnham, on his arrival, found everything spotless.

Customers at Pat's department that day found a very silent clerk, but one eager to oblige. Many times before he went home for the night did he display every piece of goods in his charge, and that with such an evident wish to please, that his sales were considerable. And the widow heard his report at bedtime with something like satisfaction.

"And what did you say to make 'em buy?" she inquired.

"Well, mother, I mostly didn't say anything. I didn't know what to say, and I couldn't say it right, neither, and so I just watched, and if they so much as turned their eyes on a piece, I got it out of the pile and showed it to 'em. I just

wished with all my might to sell to 'em, and I sold to 'em."

His mother's eyes were fixed on him, and she nodded her head approvingly. "Sure and if you couldn't do no better, that was good enough, so 'twas," was her comment. "You'll larn. But didn't nobody say nothin' to you?"

"They did, mother, of course."

"And who was they that spoke to you and what about?"

"Well, mother, there was old Mrs. Barter, for one. She's awful stingy. I've seen her more than once in the groceries. Always a-wantin' everything a little lower, and grumblin' because the quality wasn't good. Them grocers' clerks mostly hates her, I believe. And they don't want to wait on her, none of 'em. 'Twas her, I'm told, washed up two or three of them wooden butter dishes and took 'em up and wanted to sell 'em back to them she got her butter from."

"Ah!" said Mrs. O'Callaghan, with her eyes sympathetically upon her son.

"And she was to buy of you to-day, was she?"

"Yes, mother."

"And did she buy anything?"

"She did."

"What was it?"

"A calico dress."

"And how come she to do it?"

"I don't know. She begun by lookin' everything over and runnin' everything down. And at last she took hold of a piece, and says she, 'Come, young man, I've seen you a-buyin' more than once. Can you tell me this is a good piece that won't fade? 'I can, ma'am,' says I. 'You won't find no better in town.'

"'Ah! but you're sellin',' says she. 'Would you tell your mother the same?' And she looked at me sharp.

"'I would, ma'am,' says I.

"'Then I'll take it,' says she. 'I've not watched you for nothin'.'"

"And then what?" asked Mrs. O'Callaghan eagerly. This, in her opinion, was a triumph for Pat.

"Why, nothin', mother, only I wrapped it up and give it to her, and I says, 'Come again, ma'am,' and she says, 'I will, young man, you may depend.'"

The little woman regarded him proudly. But all she said was: "When you're doin' well, Pat, the thing is to see if you can't do better. You had others a-buyin' of you to-day, I hope?"

"Yes, mother."

"'Tis too late to hear about it to-night, for 'tis good sleep that sharpens the wits. And the broightest wits will bear that koind of sharpenin', so they will. I wouldn't be knowin' what to do half the time if it wasn't for sleepin' good of nights. And, by the same token, if any of them high-steppin' clerks comes around with a cigar and a-wantin' you to go here and yon of nights, jist remimber that your wits is your stock in trade, and Mr. Farnham's not wantin' dull wans about him, naythe r."

Thus having headed off any designs that might be had upon Pat, his mother went to sharpen her own wits for what-

ever the morrow might have in store for her.

And now a change began to come over Jim. He left his younger brothers in unhectored peace. He had not much to say, but ever he watched Andy from the corner of a jealous eye, and listened for him to speak. All his pugnacity was engaged in what seemed to be a profitless struggle with the speech of the grammar. "I *will* larn it yet," he repeated over and over. And even while the words were in his mouth, if he had had less obstinacy in his make-up, he would have yielded himself to despair. But a good thing happened to him. Miss Slocum, not knowing his ignoble motive, and seeing a very earnest child striving to improve himself, set about helping him in every possible way.

One day she called him to her. "Jim," she said, "asking me questions is slow work. Suppose I correct you every time you make a mistake?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Jim vaguely, not knowing the meaning of *correct*.

"You don't understand me?"

"No, ma'am."

"*Correct* means to make right. Suppose I set you right whenever you go wrong?"

"That's it!" cried Jim enthusiastically. "That's it! I can larn that way sure."

"*Learn*, not *larn*, Jim."

Jim looked at her. "'Tis learn and not larn I'll be sayin'," he declared.

"Not *I'll be sayin'*," corrected Miss Slocum, "but *I'll say*."

"*Learn*, not *larn*, and *I'll say*, not *I'll be sayin'*," amended the obedient Jim, and then he sped away.

And that night he did what never a child of Mrs. O'Callaghan's had done before. The family were at supper. Pat, paying good heed to his tongue, was manifestly improving, and the widow was congratulating him in her own way.

"What did I be sayin' to you, Pat dear? Did I be tellin' you you wasn't too old to larn? And I'll be sayin' it again, so I will."

"*Larn's* not the right of it," interrupted Jim. "*Learn's* what you ought to be

sayin'. *I'll be sayin'* ain't right, nayther," he continued. "It's *I'll say*," and he looked very important.

Pat and Andy regarded him in displeased astonishment, but the widow could take care of her own.

"And it's glad I am to see that you know so much, Jim," she said quietly. "What more do you know? Let's hear it."

Thus brought to book Jim grew confused. He blushed and stammered under the unfavorable regard of his mother and two older brothers, and finally confessed that he knew nothing more. At which Barney and Tommie nudged each other. They did not understand what all the talk was about, but they could see that Jim was very red in the face, and not at all at his ease, and their beforetime hectored little selves rejoiced.

"B'ys," said the mother, "I told you if your blessed father was here he'd not be above learning from any one, old or young. And he wouldn't, nayther. And sure he said *larn* himsilf. And from Jim

here he'd learn better than that, and he'd learn, too, how them that knows very little is the quickest to make a show of it. But kape on, Jim. It's glad I am you know the difference betwane *larn* and *learn*, and sure the only difference is that wan's wrong and the other's roight."

Jim had hoped to quite extinguish Andy by his corrections, and he hardly knew where he was when his mother finished; and he was still more abroad when Pat took him out after supper and vigorously informed him that bad manners were far worse than bad grammar.

"Well, well," thought the widow that evening as she waited alone for Pat, "Jim do be gettin' ahead of me, that he do. He's loike to have the consate, so he is, take him down as a body will. But there's wan good thing about it. While he's studyin' to beat us all on the talkin' he's lettin' the little b'ys alone famous. He didn't never do much to 'em, but he jist riled 'em completely, so he did, and made 'em cross at iverybody."

CHAPTER XIV

A month went along very quietly and, following that, another month. The weeds that had flourished along the sides of the ditches were all dead. No more did the squawking O'Callaghan geese delight themselves among them. The kitchen stove had long been brought back into the shanty, and Barney and Tommie, sitting close behind it on their short evenings that ended in bedtime at half-past seven o'clock, had only the remembrance of their labors. But that memory sweetened the prospect of savory dinners to come, for even Barney and Tommie liked to feel that they were of some importance in the family world. Often had their mother praised them for their care of the geese, and once she had bought for them a whole nickel's worth of candy and had bestowed this great treat with the words, "And how could I be

havin' geese only for the little b'ys? You'll jist be givin' Larry a bit, for sure and he'll be past four nixt summer, and helpin' you loike anything."

The candy, like the summer, was only a memory now, but, without putting their hope into words, there lingered in the minds of the two an anticipation of more candy to come.

As for Larry, he lived from day to day and took whatever came his way cheerfully, which he might well do, since he was a general pet wherever he was known.

But now a new difficulty confronted the widow. Snowtime had come. How was she to get Larry along to her wash places? She was sitting late one Friday afternoon thinking about it. All day the snow had been falling, and many times, in the early dusk, had Jim been out to measure the depth with his legs. And each time he returned he had worn a more gratified smile.

"Well, Jim," said his mother finally, "you do be grinnin' foine ivery toime you

come in, and a lot of wet you're bringin' with you, too, a-stampin' the snow off on the floor. You'll remimber that toimes are changed. Wanst it was old men as had the rheumatism, but now b'ys can have it, to say nothin' of colds and sore throats and doctors' bills. You'll stay in now. The snow can deepen without you, I'm thinkin'."

Thus admonished, Jim went with a bad grace to wash his hands, and then to set the table for supper.

Presently in came Pat.

"Where's the clothes basket, mother?" he inquired. "I'll be bringing in the clothes from the line for you."

Mrs. O'Callaghan handed him the basket with a smile, and out went Mr. Farnham's newest clerk to the summer kitchen, under whose roof the line was stretched in parallel lengths.

"I couldn't be dryin' the clothes in the house with no place to put 'em, but the new kitchen's the thing, so 'tis," the mother had said. "Clothes will dry there

famous, 'specially when it's rainin' or snowin'. Pat and Moike did a good thing when they made it. I've heard tell of them as has dryin' rooms for winter, and 'tis mysilf has wan of 'em."

These were the words that had caused Pat to smile with pleasure, and had stirred Mike's heart with determination to do yet more for his mother. And that same evening the widow's sturdy second son came to the shanty, and behind him on the snow bumped and slid his newest handiwork—a sled for Larry to ride on.

"And what have you got there?" asked Mrs. O'Callaghan when he dragged it into the house.

"A sled!" cried Barney and Tommie together, pausing on their bedward way, and opening wide their sleepy eyes.

"And 'twas mysilf was wonderin' how to get Larry along with me!" exclaimed the mother when Mike had explained the object of the sled. "What's the good of me wonderin' when I've got Moike for my b'y? 'Twas his father as would have

made a sled jist loike it, I'm thinkin'. But Moike," as she saw the light of affection in his eyes, "you'll be spoilin' me. Soon I'll not be wonderin' any more, but I'll be sayin', 'Moike will fix it some way.'"

"Will you, mother?" cried the boy. "Will you promise me that?"

"Moike! Moike!" said the widow, touched by his eager look and tone, "what a b'y you are for questions! Would I be layin' all my burdens on you, when it's six brothers you've got? 'Twouldn't be fair to you. But to know you're so ready and willin' loightens my ivery load, and it's a comfort you are to me. Your father was always for makin' easy toimes for other people, and you're loike him, Moike. And now I've something else to be talkin' of. Will you be havin' the goose for Gineral and Mrs. Brady to-morrow?"

"I will, mother," answered Mike respectfully.

"Then, Moike, when you get ready to go back, you'll foind the foinest wan of the lot all by himsilf in a box Pat brought from

the store. Mr. Farnham give it to him, though he mostly sells 'em. And I've larned that goose to slape in it, so I have, and an awful job it was, too. Geese and pigs now, Moike, are slow to larn. But he knows his place at last, so he does, and you'll foind him in it."

Then catching sight, around the corner of the table, of the enraptured two on the kitchen floor busy over the new family treasure, she cried: "Now, Barney and Tommie, to bed with you, and dream of havin' the sled Saturdays, for that's what you shall have. 'Tis Moike makes the treats for us all."

* * *

That evening at half-past nine there was a knock on the sitting-room door.

"Come!" called the General.

The door opened and in walked Mike with the sleek goose under his arm.

"My mother's sending you a goose, Mrs. Brady," he said with a bow.

The Bradys were already much attached to Mike; and the General had been heard

to say that the very name of O'Callaghan seemed to be a certificate of worthiness. So the goose was made much of and the next time Mike went home he carried a bunch of roses from Mrs. Brady.

"And sure 'tis roses as are the gift of a lady!" cried Mrs. O'Callaghan, receiving the flowers with an air of pride. "There's some as would have took the goose as their due and have made you feel loike dirt under their feet while they was takin' it. But the General and Mrs. Brady are quite another sort. And it's proud I am that they et the goose and found it good. Though it wouldn't have been good naythe if you hadn't cooked it good, Moike. There's them as can cook 'most anything and have it good, jist as there's them as can spoil the best. And now, Moike, I've news for you. But first do you notice how clean Jim kapes things? Him and Andy makes a foine team, so they do."

Mike looked about him with a critical air that increased in mock severity as he saw little Jim rapidly donning his regalia of

importance. "See a speck of dust if you can," spoke Jim's look. And then Mike was lavish with his praise.

"You don't kape Mrs. Brady's things no cleaner, do you, Moike?"

"I don't, mother, for I can't," was the answer. Hearing which, Jim became pompous, and the widow judged that she might tell her news without unduly rousing up his jealousy.

"Well, then, Moike, you'll niver be guessin' the news, only maybe you've heard it already, for 'tis school news. Andy's to be set ahead of his class into the nixt higher wan. It's proud I am, for ivery family needs a scholar, so it does."

Mike turned upon Andy a look of affectionate interest. "I hadn't heard your news, mother, but it's good news, and I'm glad to hear it," he said heartily.

"I knowed you would be glad, Moike, for 'tis yoursilf as sees that when your brother gets up you get up with him. It's bad when wan brother thinks to be gettin' ahead of all the rest." And she looked

gravely at Jim. "Brothers are made each wan to do his part, and be glad when wan and another gets up."

But little Jim appeared discontented. All this praise of Andy quite took the edge off what he himself had received. His mother sighed.

"But I'll not give him up yet," she thought after a moment. "No, I'll not give him up, for he's Tim's b'y, though most unlike him. I do moind hearin' wanst that Tim had a brother of that sort. Jim's loike him, no doubt, and he come to a bad end, so he did, a-gettin' to be an agitator, as they calls 'em. And sure what's an agitator but wan that's sour at iverybody's good luck but his own, and his own good luck turnin' out bad on account of laziness and consate? I'm needin' more wisdom than I've got when I'd be dealin' with Jim."

While the mother sat silent her sons were talking together in low tones. Andy and Jim told of the rabbits they had trapped in the hazel brush, and how they

had eaten some and some they had sold in the stores. And Mike, in his turn, told them how many rabbits there were in the Brady neighborhood, and how nobody seemed to wish to have them disturbed.

"What are they good for, if you can't catch 'em?" asked Jim, who could never catch enough.

"Good to look pretty hopping about, I guess," responded Mike.

"Huh!" exclaimed Jim, who, like many a one older than he, had small respect for opinions that clashed with his own.

"He'll be turnin' to be an agitator sure, only maybe I can head him off," thought the mother, who had been idly listening.

"Jim," she said, "'twas your father as was iver for hearin' both sides of iverything. If there's them that thinks rabbits looks pretty jumpin' around, why, no doubt they do. 'Tisn't iverybody that's trappin', you'll moind. If you was a horse now, you'd be called strong in the mouth, and you'd need a firm hand on the lines. And if you'd been brung up among

horses, as your father was, you'd know as them obstinate wans as wants the bits in their teeth are the wans as gets the beatin's. You're no horse, but things will go crossways to you all your loife if you don't do different. When there's nayther roight nor wrong in the matter let iverybody have their own way."

"Little Jim became downright sulky."

And then little Jim became downright sulky.

"Rabbits is for trappin'," he said stubbornly.

"Well, well," thought the widow, "I'll have to be waitin' a bit. But I'll be makin' something out of Jim yet."

Then she turned to Mike. "And how are you comin' on at the Gineral's?" she inquired. "It's hopin' I am you're watchin' him close and larnin' to be loike him."

"I'm trying, mother," was the modest answer.

Mrs. O'Callaghan nodded approvingly. "A pattern's a good thing for us all to go by," she said. "Your father's gone, and you can only be loike him by heedin' to what I'm tellin' you about him. But the Gineral you can see for yoursilves. If you can get to be loike your father and the Gineral both, it's proud I'll be of you. And I will say that you're a-comin' to it, Moike.

"And there's another thing. The little b'ys has their chance, too. And it's because Andy here takes as natural to bein' a gintleman as thim geese takes to squawkin'. Whether it's loikin' his book or what it is, he's the wan to have handy for the little b'ys to pattern by. As far as he's gone he knows, and he can't be beat in knowin' how to treat other folks nice. And he's that quiet about what he knows that you wouldn't think he knows anything only for seein' him act it out."

And now little Jim was completely miserable. Constantly craving praise was

little Jim, and the loss of it was torture to him. The widow glanced at him out of the corner of her eye. She saw it was time to relieve him.

"But there's wan thing Jim's got that no other wan of my b'ys has," she continued.

Jim pricked up his ears.

"He's the born foighter, is Jim. If he was big now, and there was a war to come, he'd be a soldier, I'm thinkin'. He's for foightin' iverything, even the words of a body's mouth."

This praise might be equivocal, but little Jim did not so understand it, and his pride returned.

His mother observed it. "But what you need, Jim," she went on, "is to be takin' a tuck in yoursilf. Look at the Gineral. Does he go foightin' in toimes of peace? That he don't. Will you look at the Gineral, Jim?"

Now Pat and Mike had been instructed to look at the General as their pattern.

This appeal was placing Jim alongside of his two big brothers.

"Will you look at the Gineral, Jim?" repeated Mrs. O'Callahan.

"I will," said Jim.

CHAPTER XV

Jim was enterprising. Far more enterprising than anybody gave him credit for. He had been set to copy the General, and that night as he lay down to sleep he resolved to outdo Pat and Mike. The little boys were insignificant in his eyes as he thought of what was before him, and even Andy offered small food for jealousy. To excel the two big boys was worth trying for.

Now the General was more familiar to Jim's ears than to his eyes. He at once resolved to remedy that.

"I'll have to be followin' him around and be seein' how he does, so I will," he told himself. "And I'll have to be gettin' my work done quick to be doin' it."

Accordingly he hustled through the dish-washing at a great rate the next morning, for his mother had lately decided that he might wash the dishes as well as wipe them.

The dusting, usually carefully done, was a whisk here and a wipe there in the most exposed places. By such means did he obtain a half hour of extra time, and off he went up the railroad track on his way to General Brady's. He soon came to the point where he must leave the track for the street, and, the street being comparatively unused and so without a pavement, he was compelled to wade the snow. Into it with his short legs he plunged, only anxious to reach the house before the General started down town. And he was almost out of breath when he came to the corner and turned south on the cleared sidewalk. On he hurried and around to the kitchen door.

"Is he gone?" he inquired, poking his head into the room where his brother was busily washing dishes.

Mike stared. The door had opened so softly, the words were so breathless, and the little boy so very red in the face. "Who?" he asked in astonishment.

"The Gineral," said Jim impatiently.

"Just going," returned Mike. And at the words Jim was out with the door shut behind him.

"What's got into little Jim?" thought Mike. Out of the yard flew Jim, and took on an air of indifferent loitering as he waited. Yes, there came the General. How broad his shoulders were! How straight his back! How firm his tread! At sight of all this little Jim squared himself and, a half block in the rear, walked imitatively down the street. It was all very well for his mother to say that Jim was a born fighter. But she had entirely overlooked the fact that he was a born mimic also.

Here and there a smiling girl ran to the window to gaze after the two as they passed — the stately old General and his ridiculous little copy. But it was when they neared the square that the guffaws began. The General, being slightly deaf, did not notice, and little Jim was so intent on following copy that he paid no attention. Thus they went the entire length of the east side of the square, and then along

the south side until, at the southwest corner, the old soldier disappeared in the doorway of the bank. By this time little Jim's shoulders were aching from the restraint put upon them, for Jim was not naturally erect. And his long walk at what was, to him, an usually slow pace had made his nose blue with cold. But instead of running off to get warm he pressed close against the big window and peered in at his pattern. He knew his back and his walk now, and he wanted to see his face.

Presently one of the amused spectators stepped into the bank and spoke a few words to its president, and the General turned to look at the little fellow.

"Who is he?" he asked.

"One of your O'Callaghans, General," was the laughing answer.

The General flushed. Then he beckoned to Jim, who immediately came in.

"Go back to the stove and get warm, my boy," he said. "You look cold."

Jim obeyed and presently the General's friend went out.

"Now, my boy," said the General, walking back to the stove, "what did you mean by following me?"

Little Jim's blue eyes looked up into the blue eyes of the old soldier. "Our eyes is the same color," he thought. And then he answered: "My mother told me to be makin' a pattern out of you. She told the same to Pat and Mike, too, and I'm goin' to do it better than they do, see if I don't. Why, they don't walk fine and straight like you do. But I can do it. I larned this morning."

The General laughed. "And what were you peering in at the window for?"

"Sure and I wanted to be watchin' your face, so I did. 'Tis my mother as says I'm the born fighter, and she says, 'Look at the General. Does he be goin' round fightin' in times of peace? That he don't.' And she wants me to be like you and I'm goin' to be."

"What's your name?"

"Jim."

"Well, Jim, I don't think your mother

meant that you should follow me through the street and try to walk like me. And you must not do so any more."

"But I knows how now, sir," objected Jim, who was loth to discard his new accomplishment.

"Nevertheless you must not follow me about and imitate my movements any more," forbade the General.

"And how am I to be like you then, if you won't let me do the way you do?"

For a moment the General seemed perplexed. Then he opened the door and motioned Jim out. "Ask your mother," he said.

"I won't," declared little Jim obstinately, when he found himself in the street. "I won't ask her."

But he did. The coasting was excellent on a certain hill, and the hill was only a short distance northwest of the O'Callaghan home.

"'Twill do Andy good to have a bit of a change and eat wanst of a supper he ain't cooked," the widow had said. And so it

was that she was alone, save for Larry, when Jim came in after school. Presently the whole affair of the morning came out, and Mrs. O'Callaghan listened with horrified ears.

"And do you know how that looked to them that seen you?" she asked severely. "Sure and it looked loike you was makin' fun of the Gineral."

"But I wasn't," protested little Jim.

"Sure and don't I know that? Would a b'y of mine be makin' fun of Gineral Brady?"

"He said I wasn't to do it no more," confided little Jim humbly.

The widow nodded approbation. "And what did you say then?" she asked.

"I says to him, 'How can I get to be like you, sir, when you won't let me do the way you do?'"

"And then?"

"Then he opened the door, and his hand said, 'Go outside.' And just as I was goin' he said, 'Ask your mother.'"

"'Twasn't for naught he got made a

gineral," commented Mrs. O'Callaghan. "'Tis himsilf as knows a b'y's mother is the wan. For who is it else can see how he's so full of brag he's loike to boorst and a-wantin' to do big things till he can't dust good nor wash the plates clean? Dust on the father's chair, down on the rockers where you thought it wouldn't show, and egg on the plates, and them piled so slick wan on top of the other and lookin' as innocent as if they felt thimsilves quite clean. Ah, Jim! Jim!"

The widow's fourth son blushed. He cast a hasty glance over the room and was relieved to see that Larry, his mother's only other auditor, was playing busily in a corner.

Mrs. O'Callaghan went on. She had Jim all to herself and she meant to improve her chance.

"You haint got the hang of this ambition business, Jim. That's the trouble. You're always tryin' to do some big thing and beat somebody. 'Tis well you should know the Lord niver puts little b'ys and

big jobs together. He gives the little b'ys a chance at the little jobs, and them as does the little jobs faithful gets to be the men that does the big jobs easy."

Jim now sought to turn the conversation, the doctrine of faithfulness in small things not being at all to his taste. "And will *I* be havin' a bank, too, like the Gineral?" he asked.

His mother looked at him. "There you go again, Jim," she said. "And sure how can I tell whether you'll have a bank or not? 'Tisn't all the good foightin' men as has banks. But you might try for it. And if you've got a bank in your eye, you'd best pay particular attintion to your dustin' and your dishwashin'. Them's your two first steps."

Little Jim pondered as well as he was able. It seemed to him that the first steps to everything in life, according to his mother, were dusting and dishwashing. His face was downcast and he put the dishes on the table in an absent-minded way.

"What are you thinkin' about, Jim?" asked his mother after many a sidelong glance at him. "Cheer up!"

"Ain't there no other first steps?" he asked gloomily.

"Not for you, Jim. And it's lucky you are that you don't loike the dustin' and the dishwashin'."

Jim was evidently mystified.

"Because, do you see, Jim, iverybody has got to larn sooner or later to do things they don't loike to do. You've begun in toime, so you have, and, if you kape on, you can get a lot of it done before you come to the place where you can do what you loike, such as kapin' a bank and that. But it's no business. The Gineral's business was foightin', you know. He kapes a bank jist to pass the toime."

Little Jim's eyes widened. Here was a new outlook for him.

"But you must do 'em good," admonished his mother. "There's nothin' but bad luck goes with poor dustin' and dirty dishwashin'. And spakin' of luck, it's

lucky you are I caught you at it the first toime you done 'em bad, for, do you see, I'll be lookin' out for you now for a good bit jist to be seein' that you're a b'y that can be trusted. It's hopin' I am you'll be loike your father, for 'twas your father as could be trusted ivery toime. And now I've a plan for you. We'll be havin' Moike to show you how they lays the table at the Gineral's. 'Twill be a foine thing for you to larn, and 'twill surprise Pat, and be a good thing for the little b'ys to see. Them little b'ys don't get the chance to see much otherwheres, and they'll have to be larnin' their manners to home, so they will. Pat and Moike with the good manners about eatin' they've larned at the Gineral's, and the little b'ys without a manner to their back! Sure and 'twill be a lesson to 'em to see the table when you've larned to set it roight."

Jim brightened at once. He had had so much lesson himself to-day that it was a great pleasure to think of his younger brothers being instructed in their turn. In

they came at that moment, their red little hands tingling with cold. But they were hilarious, for kind-hearted Andy had taken them to the hill, and over and over they had whizzed down its long length with him. At another time Jim might have been jealous; but to-night he regarded them from the vantage ground of his superior information concerning them. They were to be instructed. And Jim knew it, if they did not. He placed the chairs with dignity, and hoped instruction might prove as unwelcome to Barney and Tommie as it was to him. And as they jounced down into their seats the moment

"In they came at that moment."

the steaming supper was put upon the table, and gazed at it with eager, hungry eyes, and even gave a sniff or two, he felt that here was a field for improvement, indeed. And he smiled. Not that Jim was a bad boy, or a malicious one, but when Barney and Tommie were wrong, it was the thing that they should be set right, of course.

CHAPTER XVI

Pat had now been in Mr. Farnham's employ two months and more, and never had his faithfulness slackened. He had caught the knack of measuring goods easily and tying up packages neatly. He could run off a length of calico and display it to any customer that came to him, and what most endeared him to Mr. Farnham was that he could sell.

"Best clerk I ever had," the merchant told himself. But he did not advance this "best clerk" although Pat longed and hoped for promotion. Upon every opportunity he studied dress goods at the front end of the store, and carpets and cloaks at the rear. And day by day he went on patiently selling prints, ginghams and muslins.

"'Tis the best things as are longest a-comin' sometimes," said his mother en-

couragingly. "Are you sellin" what you've got as well as you know how?"

"I am, mother."

"Well, if you are, be sure Mr. Farnham knows it, and, by the same token, he'd be knowin' it if you was gapin' in the customers' faces or hummin' or whistlin' soft loike while you waited on 'em. Mr. Wall had a clerk wanst that done that way. I've seen him. And, by the same token, he ain't got him now. Ladies don't care for hummin' and whistlin' when they're buyin' goods."

And now trade was growing heavier. The other clerks were overburdened, while Pat in his humble place had little to do. Suddenly there came a call for him at the dress counter. A lady had come in and both the other clerks were busy. She was one who continually lamented in an injured tone of voice that she lived in so small a town as Wennott, and she rarely made purchases there. Her name was Mrs. Pomeroy.

"Let us see if Pat sells her anything.

It will be a wonder if he does," thought Mr. Farnham.

Languidly Mrs. Pomeroy examined this and that in an uninterested way, and all the time Pat was paying the closest attention, trying to discover just what she wanted. His heart was beating fast. If only he could make a sale, what might it not mean to him?

"Here is a pattern for a street dress, madam." Pat's voice was musical, and his manner most respectful. Mrs. Pomeroy felt interested and attracted at once. She looked on while Pat drew out the dress pattern from its box, displaying to advantage its soft coloring and fine texture.

Mrs. Pomeroy put her head on one side and regarded it through half-shut eyes.

"The only pattern of exactly its sort and color," said the persuasive voice of Pat. He had learned from the other clerks that this was a great recommendation to a piece of goods and helped to sell it.

Mrs. Pomeroy reflected.

She asked the price and reflected again, and all the time she noticed that Pat's interest was real and not simulated; that he was doing his best to please her. She liked the goods, but not better than a pattern she had seen at Wall's. But Wall's clerks were inattentive and indifferent. They had an air that said "There are the goods. Buy 'em or leave 'em. 'Tis nothing to us."

She was thinking of this as well as of the dress goods before her and finally she said, "You may wrap the pattern up. I will take it."

Then did Pat's eyes dance with delight, and he thought of his mother. But it was only a glancing thought, for in a second he was saying: "Mr. Farnham has gloves to match."

"I will look at them."

To look was to buy when Pat was salesman, and, in a few moments, the happiest clerk in the store, Pat walked modestly back to his own place.

"Well done, Pat!" exclaimed Mr. Farnham, going up to him. "I wish you would keep an eye on the dress counter, and, whenever another clerk is needed, attend there."

"I will, sir," answered Pat gratefully.

Three times more was Pat needed before the day closed, and every time he made a good sale.

As usual Mrs. O'Callaghan was waiting alone for Pat. She was extremely tired and almost despondent. For to earn what she could and keep her sons up to the mark she had set for them was a great strain on her. And she missed her husband. More and more she missed him. "Ah, Tim!" she cried, "'twas a great thing you done for me when you taught our b'ys that moind me they must and that without questions about it. Only for that I couldn't do much with 'em. And without you it's hard enough, so it is. I hain't never laid finger on wan of 'em, and I won't nayther, for sure they're not beasts but b'ys. I mistrust my hard-

est toimes are ahead of me. Pat and Moike and Andy don't trouble me none. Sure and a bloind man can see them three is all roight. But Jim and Barney and Tommie and Larry now—how can I be tellin' what's comin' of them? And I can't set the big b'ys over 'em only to take care of 'em loike, for sure b'ys as are worth anything won't be bossed by their big brothers. They sees the unfairness of it."

And then intruding upon her thoughts came a boy's merry whistle; a whistle that told of a heart where happiness was bubbling up and overflowing, and the whistling came nearer and nearer.

"Whativer do be makin' Pat come home with a tune loike that?" she asked. And she half rose as Pat's hand opened the door and the tall young fellow stepped in. The tiny lamp was very bright, and in its light the boy's eyes were brilliant.

"Well, Pat!" exclaimed his mother. "The lamp's but a poor match for your eyes to-night. You've got news for me. What is it?"

And Pat told with an eager tongue how, at last, he had a chance to attend at the dress counter when the two regular clerks there were busy and another one was needed.

The widow was silent a moment. It was not quite what she had hoped to hear, knowing her Pat as she did, but she was determined to keep her son's courage up. So she said, "Well, then, if you've got so far, it rests with yoursilf to go farther. 'Tis a blessed thing that there are such a many things in this world a-restin' on a body's lone silf. But there's them that niver foinds it out, and that goes about layin' their own blame here, there and yon."

Pat's elation lasted him overnight and even well on into the next day. And that day was more wonderful than the one before it. For, about the middle of the forenoon, General Brady came into the store and walked back to Mr. Farnham's desk, giving Pat a smile and a bow as he passed him, and receiving in return an af-

fectionate look. The one evening a week with the General had not served to diminish the boy's fondness for him, but it had served to make Pat a greater favorite than ever with the old soldier.

"Mr. Farnham," said the General, after a few pleasant words had been exchanged, "Mr. Wall offers thirty dollars a month for Pat. Do you wish to keep him?"

"I suppose I shall have to come up to Wall's offer if I do?"

"Exactly," was the response with a smile. The General was delighted with Pat's success, and he could not help showing it.

"Pat is getting himself a reputation among your customers," he remarked pleasantly.

"Frankly, General," replied Mr. Farnham, "he's the best boy I ever had. He shall have his thirty dollars."

If the whistle was merry the night before, it was mad with joy on that Wednesday evening.

"Pat! Pat! what ails you?" cried his

mother as the boy came bounding in with a shout and a toss of his cap. "You'll be wakin' your brothers."

"I'd like to wake 'em, mother," was the jubilant answer. "I've got news that's worth wakin' 'em for."

"And what is it?" was the eager question.

"Well, mother, then it's this. I'm to have thirty dollars a month and to stay at the dress counter."

"Pat! Pat!" exclaimed the little woman, excited in her turn. "It's forty years old I am, and sure and I know better than to be wakin' b'ys out of their slape jist to be hearin' a bit of news. But I'm goin' to wake 'em. They shall be knowin' this night what comes to a b'y that does his best when he's got Gineral Brady to back him. And would Gineral Brady back you if you didn't desarve it? That he wouldn't. I ain't heard nothin' of his backin' up street loafers nor any sort of shiftless b'ys."

The boys were wakened, and a difficult

task it was. But when, at last, they were all thoroughly roused and were made to understand that there was no fire, nor any uproar in the streets, nor a train off the track, they stared about them wonderingly. And when they had been told of Pat's good fortune, "Is *that* all?" asked jealous little Jim, and down went his red head on the pillow, and shut went his eyes in a twinkling. Barney and Tommie, who knew not the value of money, gazed solemnly at their mother and Pat, and then into each other's eyes and composedly laid themselves down to renewed slumber. And Larry howled till the windows rattled, for Larry was a strong child for his years, and never before had he been waked up in the night. But Andy sat up in bed and clasped his brother's hand in both his while his face showed his delight.

And then something happened to Andy. His mother, disgusted at the conduct of the little boys, put her arm around his neck and kissed him.

"It's a jewel you are, Andy," she said, "with good understandin' in you. You'll be wakin' up Pat in the noight some day."

"Huh!" thought jealous little Jim, who was only feigning sleep.

"Now, mother," said Pat when the tiny lamp stood once more on the kitchen table, and the two sat beside the stove, "will you give up two of your wash places?"

"Not I, Pat dear. With six of us, not countin' you and not countin' Moike, who cares for himsilf, we need all the money we can honestly get."

"Only one, then, mother; only one. My good luck is no comfort to me if I can't think of your getting a day's rest every week out of it."

The widow regarded him earnestly. She saw how her refusal would pain him and she yielded. "Well, then," she said, "wan place, Pat dear, I'll give up. And it'll be Wednesday, because 'twas on a Wednesday that your luck come to you."

Another month went by and the holiday trade was over. Nevertheless the amount of custom at Mr. Farnham's did not diminish much. Ladies who went out on looking tours, if they began at Farnham's ended there by purchasing. If they stopped first at Wall's they went on to Farnham's and bought there. Mr. Wall was not blind. And so, one day General Brady walked into Mr. Farnham's store and back to his desk again.

"Another rise?" asked the merchant laughingly.

"Something of the sort," was the rejoinder. "Mr. Wall offers forty dollars a month for Pat."

"He doesn't take him though," was the significant answer.

The General laughed. "I see you appreciate him," he said.

"Well, to tell the truth, General, I know my right hand man when I see him, and Pat O'Callaghan is his name. I only wish there were two of him."

The General's face grew thoughtful.

"There may be," he said at length. "His next brother, Mike, is at our house, and just as much of a born trader as Pat. His ways, however, are a little different."

Mr. Farnham put out his hand. "I take this hint as very kind of you, General. When may I have him?"

"Could you wait till next fall? He ought to finish this school year. Next winter I could take charge of him one evening a week together with Pat. The terms must be the same for him as they were for Pat when he began—fifteen dollars a month and one evening each week out."

"All right, General. I'll be frank with you—I'm glad to get him on those terms. I begin to think that it's enough of a recommendation for a boy to be an O'Callaghan."

The General smiled as he left Mr. Farnham's desk, and on his way out of the store, he stopped to speak to Pat.

"What is your greatest ambition, my boy?" he asked. And he knew what an-

swer he would receive before Pat replied, "To have a store with O'Callaghan Brothers over the door."

Again the General smiled, and this time very kindly. "I'll tell you a sort of a secret," he said, "that isn't so much of a secret that you need to hesitate about speaking of it. Mike's coming to Mr. Farnham next fall."

Then the boy got hold of the man's hand. "General Brady," he began after a moment of silence, "you know I can't thank you as I ought in words, but——" and then he stopped. This boy who could fight to defend his small brother, who could face contempt to ease his mother's burdens, who could grub and dig and win a chance for his own promotion, was very near to tears.

He did not wish to shed those tears, and the General knew it. So with a hearty "Good-by, Pat," the fine old soldier passed on.

CHAPTER XVII

The shanty by the tracks had never seen such rejoicing as occurred within its cheap walls that January evening. Pat had said nothing at supper time of his wonderful news concerning Mike. He knew how anxious his brother would be to tell it himself, and he had left the tale of his own advancement to follow Mike's disclosure. For he felt sure that he should find Mike upon his return from the store at nine o'clock, and that he would spend the night at home, as he sometimes did. Many times that day he glanced at the print and gingham counter and imagined Mike's sturdy figure behind it. Pat's hands were long and slender, while Mike's were of the sort known as "useful." "Before ever he comes in he shall know how to measure and display goods, and how to make neat

packages," he thought. "I'll teach him myself odd times."

And then followed visions of the increased comfort to come to the shanty. He saw his mother, with never a wash place, staying at home every day to guide and control the little boys. He saw Andy, quiet, studious Andy, moving gently about in General Brady's house, and the thought came to him that the General would probably like him better than he did either Mike or himself, though Andy would never be much of a hand at marketing. And then came the most daring thought of all — "Andy shall go to college. Mike and I will help him to it."

But never an opportunity of making a sale did Pat miss. With that last decision to send Andy to college he had hung upon himself a new weight. Not a weight that oppressed and bent him down, but a weight that caused him to hold his head up and resolve, as never before, to do his best.

"Andy's not strong," his busy brain, in the intervals of trade, ran on. But with

Mike on one side of him and me on the other, he'll get to the place where he can do his best. General Brady is helping Mike and me. It's a pity if the two of us can't help Andy."

It was hard to keep still at supper time, but Pat succeeded, only allowing himself to bestow a look of particular affection on his favorite brother.

But his mother was not to be deceived. She followed him to the door and, putting her head outside, said softly, "You may kape still if you want to, Pat dear, but 'tis mysilf as knows you've somethin' on your moind."

"Well, then, mother," prophesied Pat with a laughing backward glance, "I think Mike will be over to spend the evening with you." And he was off.

"And what does he mean by that?" wondered Mrs. O'Callaghan, looking after him. "There's somethin' astir. I felt it by the look of him."

She turned back and shut the door, and there was little Jim loitering as if he

hardly knew whether to wash the dishes or not.

"'Tis the bank that's ahead of you, do you moind, Jim? Hurry up with your dish pan. Pat was sayin' maybe Mike 'll be home this evenin'."

In response to this urging little Jim made a clatter with the dishes that might be taken by some to represent an increase of speed, but his mother was not of that number.

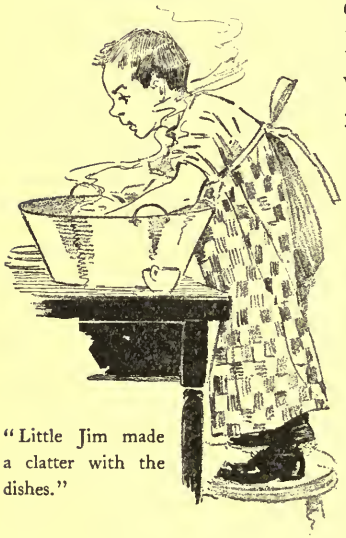
"Come, Jim," she said, "less n'ise. If you was hustlin' them thin china dishes of Mrs. Gineral Brady's loike that there'd be naught left of 'em but pieces—and dirty pieces, too, for they'd all be broke before you'd washed wan of 'em."

"I ain't never goin' to wash any of Mrs. Gineral Brady's dishes," remarked Jim calmly.

"You're young yet, Jim, to be sayin' what you're goin' to do and what not," was the severe response. "At your age your father would niver have said he would or he would not about what was a long way

ahead of him, for your father was wise, and he knowed that ne'er a wan of us knows what's comin' to us."

But Jim's countenance expressed indifference. "Gineral Brady's got a bank without washin' dishes for it," he observed.



"Little Jim made a clatter with the dishes."

The widow stared. This was a little nearer to impertinence than anything she had before encountered.

"You moind the Gineral made gravy, do you?" she said at last. "And good gravy, too?"

Jim was obliged to own that he remembered it. "And that he done it with an apron on to kape from gettin' burnt and spattered?"

Jim nodded.

"Him that ain't above makin' gravy,

ain't above washin' dishes, nayther," was the statement made in Mrs. O'Callaghan's most impressive manner. "Show Gineral Brady a pile of dishes that it was his place to wash, and he'd wash 'em, you may depind. 'Tis iver the biggest folks as will do little things loike that when they has to, and do 'em good, too. What's got into you, Jim?"

"You think Pat and Mike and Andy's better than me," burst out the jealous little fellow.

"I think," said his mother, "that Pat and Moike and Andy *does* better than you, for they takes what's set for 'em and does it as good as they can. But you're all Tim's b'ys, so you are."

"If I done like Pat and Mike and Andy," asked Jim hesitatingly, "would you think I was just as good?"

"Sure and I would, Jim," said his mother earnestly. "Will you try?"

"I will."

And then steps crunched on the snowy path that led to the shanty door, and

Mike came in. There was that in his face that told his mother without a word that he brought good news.

"Moike! Moike! 'Tis the shanty's the luckiest place in town, for there's naught but good news comes to it, do you see? What have you got to tell?"

"I've got to tell," cried Mike in ringing tones, "that next fall I'm to go to Mr. Farnham's store at fifteen dollars a month. Pat shan't do all for you, mother. I'll do some myself."

For a moment the widow was dazed. Then she said, "I don't know what I was lookin' for, but it wasn't anything so good as this. 'Twas Gineral Brady got you the place, was it?"

"It was, mother."

"I knowed it. He's the man to be loike." She looked around upon her sons, and then she said, "I want all my b'ys to remimber that it's honorable empl'yment to do anything in the world for Gineral Brady and Mrs. Gineral Brady, too. The toime may come when you can

do some big thing for 'em, but the toime's roight here when you can sweep and cook and wash dishes for 'em, and make 'em aisy and comfortable, and so lingthen out their days. Moike goin' to the store gives Andy a chance to show that the O'Callaghans knows how to be grateful. And, Moike, you'll be takin' home another goose for 'em when you go. A goose ain't much, but it shows what I'd do if I had the chance. And that's all that makes a prisint seem good anyway—jist to know that the giver's heart is warm toward you."

She paused and then went on, "Well, well, and that's what Pat was kapin' still about at supper toime. I could see that he knowed somethin' that he wouldn't tell. He'd be givin' you the chance to bring your own good news, Moike, do you see? Pat's the b'y to give other folks the chances as is their due. There's them that fond of gabblin' and makin' a stir that they'd have told it thimsilves, but sure O'Callaghan ain't their name."

At this every face grew bright, for even Barney and Tommie saw that no undue praise of Pat was meant, but that, as O'Callaghans, they were all held incapable of telling other people's stories, and they lifted their heads up. All but Larry who, with sleepily drooping crown, was that moment taken up and prepared for bed.

"And now, Moike," said Mrs. O'Callaghan when Larry had been disposed of, "'tis fitting you should sit to-night in the father's chair. Sit you down in it."

"Not I, mother," responded the gallant Mike. "Sit you in it, and 'twill be all the same as if I sat there myself."

"Well, well, Moike," said the widow with a pleased smile. "Have it your own way. Kape on tryin' to spoil your mother with kindness. 'Tis somethin' you larned from your father, and I'll not be denyin' it makes my heart loight."

And then the talk went on to Andy's promotion to General Brady's kitchen.

"Andy and me won't be a team then,"

put in little Jim. "I'll run things myself. I guess I can cook."

"Well said, Jim!" cried his mother. "To be sure you can cook—when you've larned how. There's them that takes to cookin' by nature, I've heard, but I've niver seen any of 'em. There's rules to iverything, and iverybody must larn 'em. For 'tis the rule that opens the stingy hand, and shuts a bit the ginerous wan, and so kapes all straight."

But little Jim turned a deaf ear to his mother's wisdom. He was thinking what wonderful dishes he would concoct, and how often they would have pudding. Pudding was Jim's favorite food, and something seldom seen on the widow's table. Little Jim resolved to change the bill of fare, and to go without pudding only when he must. He could not hope to put his plans into operation for many months to come, however; so, with a sigh, he opened his eyes and ears again to what was passing around him, and was just in time to see Barney and Tommie marching to bed an

hour later than usual. They had been permitted to sit up till half-past eight in honor of Mike's good fortune. Had their mother known all, they might have stayed in the kitchen engaged in the difficult task of keeping their eyes open at least an hour longer. But they were fast enough asleep in their bed when Pat came gaily in.

"Ah, Pat, my b'y, you kept still at supper toime famous, so you did, but the news is out," began Mrs. O'Callaghan. "It's Moike that's in luck, and sure he desarves it."

"That he does, mother," agreed Pat heartily. "But will you say the same for me if I tell you something?"

The widow regarded him anxiously. There could not be bad news! "Out with it quick, Pat!" she cried.

"Well, then, mother," said Pat with mock resignation in his tone and a sparkle of fun in his eye, "I'm to have forty dollars a month."

"Forty dollars!" repeated the mother. "Forty dollars! That's the Gineral's do-

in's again. B'ys, I'd be proud to see any wan of you crawl on your knees to sarve the Gineral. Look at all he's done for us, and us doin' nothin' to desarve it, only doin' our best."

And there were tears in the widow's eyes.

"But, mother," resumed Pat, "'tis yourself has the bad luck."

"And what do you mean, Pat?"

"You've lost another wash place to-night."

Mrs. O'Callaghan smiled. "Are you sure of it?" she asked.

"I am," was the determined answer.

"Have it your own way. You and Moike are headstrong b'ys, so you are. If you kape on I'll have nothin' to do but to sit with my hands folded. And that's what your father was always plazed to see me do."

The two brothers exchanged glances of satisfaction, while Andy looked wistfully on and little Jim frowned jealously.

"Now, mother," said Pat, "I've the

thought for you. It came to me to-day in the store. 'Tis the best thought ever I had. Andy's going to college."

The delicate boy started. How had Pat divined the wish of his heart?

"'Tis Andy that will make us all proud, if only he can go to college," concluded this unselfish oldest brother.

The widow glanced at the lit-up countenance and eager eyes of her third son, and, loth to rouse hopes that might later have to be dashed down, observed, "Thim colleges are ixpinsive, I belave."

Andy's face clouded with anxiety. There must be a chance for him, or Pat would not have spoken with so much certainty.

"They may be," replied Pat, "but Andy will have Mike on one side of him and me on the other, and we'll make it all right."

"That we will," cried Mike enthusiastically. "By the time he needs to go I'll be making forty dollars a month myself, and little Jim will be earning for himself."

Sturdy Mike as he spoke cast an encouraging look on his favorite brother, who laid by his frown and put on at once an air of importance.

"I'm goin' to be a foightin' man loike the Gineral," he announced pompously.

"Well, well," cried the widow. "I'm gettin' old fast. You'll all be growed up in a few minutes."

And then they all laughed.

But presently the mother said, "Thank God for brothers as is brothers. Andy is goin' to college sure."

CHAPTER XVIII

Summer time came again. The stove went out into the airy kitchen, and a larger flock of geese squawked in the weeds and ditches. Again Andy and Jim drove the cows, Andy of a morning with a dreamy stroll, and Jim of an evening with a strut that was intended for a military gait. Who had told little Jim of West Point, the family did not know. But he had been told by somebody.

And his cows were to him as a battalion to be commanded. The General used to watch him from his front veranda with a smile. Somewhere Jim had picked up the military salute, and he never failed to honor the General with it as he strutted past with his cows. And always the old soldier responded with an amused look in his eyes which Jim was too far away to

see, even if he had not been preoccupied with his own visions. Jim was past ten now, and not much of a favorite with other boys. But he was a prime favorite with himself.

"West P'int," mused Mrs. O'Callaghan. "Let him go there if he can. 'Twill be better than gettin' to be an agitator."

The widow continued her musings and finally she asked, "Where is West P'int, Jim?"

"It's where they make foightin' men out of boys."

"Is it far from here?"

"I don't know. I can get there anyway." His mother looked at him and she saw pugnacity written all over him. His close-cropped red hair, which was of a beautiful shade and very thick, stood straight on end all over his head. His very nature seemed belligerent.

"The trouble with you, Jim," she said, "is that you'd iver go foightin' in toimes of peace. Foight when foightin's to be

done, and the rest of the toime look plissant loike the Gineral."

"I ain't foightin' in times of peace any more," responded little Jim confidentially. "I ain't licked a boy for three weeks. Mebbe I won't lick any one all summer."

His mother sighed. "I should hope you wouldn't, Jim," she said. "'Tisn't gintlemanly to be lickin' any wan with your fist."

"And what would I be lickin' 'em with?" inquired Jim wonderingly.

"You're not to be lickin' 'em at all. Hear to me now, Jim, and don't be the only wan of your father's b'ys I'll have to punish. Wait till you get to your West P'int, and larn when and where to foight. Will you, Jim?"

Little Jim reflected. The request seemed a reasonable one, and so "I will," said he.

Evening after evening he drove the cows and gave his commands at the corners of the streets. And the cows plodded on, swinging their tails to brush the flies away

from their sides, stopping here and there where a mouthful of grass might be picked up, stirring the dust in dry weather with their dragging feet, and sinking hoof-deep in the mud when there had been rain. But always little Jim was the commander — even when the rain soaked him and ran in rills from his hat brim.

On rainy mornings Andy, wearing rubber boots and a rubber coat and carrying an umbrella, picked his way along, following his obedient charges to the pasture gate. But little Jim liked to have bare legs and feet and to feel the soft mud between his toes, and the knowledge that he was getting wetter and wetter was most satisfactory to him. At home there was always a clean shirt and a pair of cottonade pantaloons waiting for him, and nothing but a "Well, Jim!" by way of reproof.

"File right!" little Jim would cry, or "File left!" as the case might be. And when the street corner was turned, "Forward!"

All this circumstance and show had its

effect on the two small Morton boys and at last, on a pleasant June evening, they began to mock him.

Jim stood it silently for a quarter of a second, while his face grew red. Then he burst out, "I'd lick both of you, if I was sure this was a where or when to foight!"

His persecutors received this information with delight, and repeated it afterward to their older brother with many chuckles.

"Lucky for you!" was his answer. "He can whip any boy in town of your size." Whereat the little fellows grew sober, and recognized the fact that some scruple of Jim's not understood by them had probably saved them unpleasant consequences of their mockery.

Jim's ambition, in due time, came to the ears of General Brady, and very soon thereafter the old soldier, who had now taken the whole O'Callaghan family under his charge, contrived to meet the boy.

"Jim," said he, "I hear you're quite set on West Point. I also hear that you did

not stand well in your classes last year. I advise you to study hard hereafter."

Jim touched his hat in military style. "What's larnin' your lessons got to do with bein' a foightin' man, sir?" he asked respectfully.

"A great deal, my boy. If you ever get to West Point you will have to study here, and you will have to go to school there besides."

Jim sighed. "You can't get to be nothin' you want to be without doin' a lot you don't want to do," he said despondently. "I was goin' to have a bank loike you, sir, but my mother said the first steps to it was dustin' and dishwashin', so I give up the notion."

The General laughed and little Jim went his way, but he remembered the General's words. As the summer waned and the time for school approached the cows heard no more "File right! File left! Forward!" Little Jim had no love for study and he drove with a "Hi, there! Get along with you!" But it was all one to the cows.

And so his dreams of West Point faded. He began to study the cook book, for now Andy was to go to General Brady's, and on two days of the week he was to make the family happy with his puddings. Mrs. O'Callaghan, having but two days out now, had decided to do the cooking herself on those days when she was at home.

But never a word said little Jim to his mother on the subject of puddings. "I can read just how to make 'em. I'll not be botherin' her," he thought. "Pat and Mike is always wantin' her to take it aisy. She can take it aisy about the puddin', so she can."

The week before school began his mother had given him some instructions of a general character on cooking and sweeping and bed-making. "I'm home so much, Jim," she told him, "that I'll let you off with makin' the bed where you're to slape with Mike. That you must make so's to be larnin' how."

"Wan bed's not much," said little Jim airily.

"See that you makes it good then," was the answer.

"And don't you be burnin' the steak nor soggin' the potatoes," was her parting charge when she went to her washing on Monday, the first day of school.

"Sure and I won't," was the confident response. "I know how to cook steak and potatoes from watchin' Andy."

That night after school little Jim stepped into Mr. Farnham's store. "I'm needin' a few raisins for my cookin'," he said to Pat.

Pat looked surprised, but handed him the money and little Jim strutted out.

"What did Jim want?" asked Mike when he had opportunity.

"Raisins for his cooking." And both brothers grinned.

"I'll just be doin' the hardest first," said little Jim as, having reached home, he tossed off his hat, tied on his apron, and washed his hands. "And what's that but the puddin'?"

He slapped the pudding dish out on the

table, opened his paper of raisins, ate two or three just to be sure they were good, and then hastily sought the cook book. It opened of itself at the pudding page, which little Jim took to be a good omen. "Puddin's the thing," he said.

"Now how much shall I make? Barney and Tommie is awful eaters when it comes to somethin' good, and so is Larry. I'd ought to have enough."

He read over the directions.

"Seems to me this receipt sounds skimpin'," was his comment. "Somethin's got to be done about it. Most loike it wasn't made for a big family, but for a little wan loike General Brady's."

He ate another raisin.

"A little puddin's just nothin'," he said. "I'll just put in what the receipt calls for, and as much more of everything as it seems to need."

Busily he measured and stirred and tasted, and with every taste more sugar was added, for little Jim liked sweets. At last it was ready for the oven, even down

to the raisins, which had been picked from their stems and all unwashed and unstoned cast into the pudding basin. And never before had that or any other pudding dish been so full. If Jim so much as touched it, it slopped over.

"And sure and that's because the puddin' dish is too little," he remarked to himself. "They'll have to be gettin' me a bigger wan. And how long will it take it to bake, I wonder? Till it's done, of course."

He turned to the stove, which was now in the house again, and the fire was out.

"Huh!" exclaimed little Jim. "I'll soon be makin' a fire."

He rushed for the kindling, picking out a swimming raisin as he ran. "They'll see the difference between Andy's cookin' and mine, I'm thinkin'. Dustin' and dishwashin'! Just as if I couldn't cook with the best of them!"

The sugar was sifted over the table, his egg-shells were on the floor, and a path of flour led to the barrel when, three-

quarters of an hour later, the widow stepped in. But there was a roaring fire and the pudding was baking.

"Well, Jim," cried his mother, "'tis a big fire you've got, sure. But I don't see no potatoes a-cookin'."

Jim looked blank. He had forgotten the potatoes. He had been so busy coaling up the fire.

"Run and get 'em," directed his mother. "There's no toime for palin' 'em. We'll have to b'ile 'em with their jackets on."

But there was no time even for that, for Pat and Mike came in to supper and could not be kept waiting.

Hastily the widow got the dishpan and washed off the sticky table, and her face, as Jim could see, was very sober. Then, while Jim set the table, Pat fried the steak and Mike brushed up the flour from the floor.

And now a burnt smell was in the air. It was not the steak. It seemed to seep out of the oven.

"Open the oven door, Jim," commanded Mrs. O'Callaghan, after one critical sniff.

"Open the oven door, Jim."

The latest cook of the O'Callaghans obeyed, and out rolled a cloud of smoke. The pudding had boiled over and flooded the oven bottom. Poor Jim!

"What's in the oven, Jim? Perhaps you'll be tellin' us," said his mother gravely.

"My puddin'," answered little Jim, very red in the face.

At the word pudding the faces of Barney and Tommie and Larry, who had come in very hungry, lit up. But at the smell they clouded again. A pudding lost was worse than having no pudding to begin with. For to lose what is within reach of his spoon is hard indeed for any boy to bear.

"And what was it I told you to be cookin' for supper?" asked the widow when they had all sat down to steak and bread and butter, leaving the doors and windows wide open to let out the pudding smoke.

But little Jim did not reply and his downcast look was in such contrast to his erect hair, which no failure of puddings could down, that Pat and Mike burst out laughing. The remembrance of the raisins little Jim had so pompously asked

for was upon them, too. And even Mrs. O'Callaghan smiled.

"Was it steak and potatoes I told you to be cookin'?" she persisted.

Little Jim nodded miserably.

"I'll not be hard on you, Jim," said his mother, "for I see you're ashamed of yourself, and you ought to be, too. But I'll say this to you; them that cooks puddin's when they're set to cook steak and potatoes is loike to make a smoke in the world, and do themsilves small credit. Let's have no more puddin's, Jim, till I give you the word."

That was all there was of it. But Jim had lost his appetite for pudding, and it was long before it returned to him.

CHAPTER XIX

There were three to sit by the kitchen stove now and talk of an evening from half-past nine till ten, and they were the widow and Pat and Mike.

"It's Andy that makes me astonished quite," observed Mrs. O'Callaghan. "Here it is the first of December and him three months at Gineral Brady's and gettin' fat on it. He niver got fat to home, and that's what bates me."

"Well, mother, he's got a nice big room by himself to sleep in. The Physiology's down on crowding, and five boys in one bedroom ain't good for a nervous boy like Andy."

"Nor it ain't good for the rest of you, nayther," responded Mrs. O'Callaghan, with conviction.

"What do you say, b'ys? Shall we ask the landlord to put us on another room in

the spring? He'll raise the rint on us if he does."

The widow regarded her sons attentively, and they, feeling the proud responsibility of being consulted by their mother, answered as she would have them.

"Then that's settled," said she. "The more room, the more rint. Any landlord can see that—a lawyer, anyway. Do you think, b'ys, Andy'll be a lawyer when he comes from college?"

"Why, mother?" asked Pat.

"'Cause I don't want him to be. He ain't got it in him to be comin' down hard and sharp on folks, and so he won't be a good wan. He'll be at the law loike little Jim at puddin's. You niver was to coort, was you, b'ys?"

Pat and Mike confessed that they had never been at court.

"I knowed you hadn't. I jist asked you. Well, you see, b'ys, them lawyers gets the witnesses up and asks 'em all sorts of impudent questions, and jist as good as tells 'em they lies quite often.

Andy couldn't niver do the loikes of that. 'Tain't in him. Do you know, b'ys, folks can't do what ain't in 'em, no matter if they do go to college. Now little Jim's the wan for a lawyer. He'd be the wan to make a man forget his own name, and all on account of impudent questions."

Pat and Mike looked surprised. They were both fond of little Jim, Mike particularly so.

"I see you wonders at me, but little Jim's a-worryin' me. I don't know what to be doin' with him. B'ys, would you belave it? I can't teach him a thing. Burn the steak he will if I lave him with it, and Moike knows the sort of a bed he makes. He's clane out of the notion of that West P'int and bein' a foightin' man, and the teacher's down on him at the school for niver larnin' his lessons. And the fear's with me night and day that he'll get to be wan of them agitators yet."

Pat and Mike looked at each other. Never before had their mother said a word

to them about any of their brothers. And while they looked at each other the brave little woman kept her eyes fixed on the stove.

"The first step to bein' an agitator," she resumed as if half to herself, "is niver to be doin' what you're set to do good. Then, of course, them you work for don't loike it, and small blame to 'em. And the nixt thing is to get turned off and somebody as *will* do it good put in your place. And then the nixt step is to go around tellin' iverybody you meets, whether you knows 'em or not, how you're down on your luck. And how it's a bad world with no chance in it for poor folks, when iverybody knows most of the rich folks begun poor, and if there's no chance for poor folks, how comes them that's rich now to be rich when they started poor? And then the nixt step is to make them that's content out of humor, rilin' 'em up with wishin' for what they've got no business with, seein' they hain't earned it. And that's all there is to it, for sure when

you've got that far you're wan of them agitators."

The boys listened respectfully, and their mother went on: "Little Jim's got started that way. He's that far along that he don't do nothin' good he's set at only when it's a happen so. You can't depind on him. I've got to head him off from bein' an agitator, for he's your father's b'y, and I can't meet Tim in the nixt world if I let Jim get ahead of me. B'ys, will you help me? I've always been thinkin' I couldn't have your help; I must do it alone. But, b'ys, I can't do it alone." The little woman's countenance was anxious as she gazed into the sober faces of Pat and Mike.

Nothing but boys themselves, though with the reliability of men, they promised to help.

"I knowed you would," said the widow gratefully. "And now good night to you. It's gettin' late. But you've eased my moind wonderful. Just the spakin' out has done me good. Maybe he'll come through all roight yet."

The next morning Mrs. O'Callaghan rose with a face bright as ever, but Pat and Mike were still sober.

"Cheer up!" was her greeting as they came into the kitchen where she was already bustling about the stove. "Cheer up, and stand ready till I give you the word. I'm goin' to have wan more big try at Jim. You took such a load off me with your listenin' to me and promisin' to help that it's heartened me wonderful."

The two elder sons smiled. To be permitted to hearten their mother was to them a great privilege, and suddenly little Jim did not appear the hopeless case he had seemed when they went to bed the night before. They cheered up, and the three were pleasantly chatting when sleepy-eyed little Jim came out of the bedroom.

"Hurry, now, and get washed, and then set your table," said his mother kindly.

But little Jim was sulky.

"I'm tired of gettin' up early mornin's just to be doin' girl's work," he said.

Mrs. O'Callaghan nodded significantly at Pat and Mike. "What was that story, Moike, you was tellin' me about the smartest fellow in the Gineral's mess, before he got to be a gineral, you know, bein' so handy at all sorts of woman's work? Didn't you tell me the Gineral said there couldn't no woman come up to him?"

"I did, mother."

"I call that pretty foine. Beatin' the women at their own work. There was only wan man in the mess that could do it, you said?"

"Yes, mother," smiled Mike.

"I thought so. 'Tain't often you foind a rale handy man loike that. And he was the best foighter they had, too?"

"Yes, mother."

"I thought I remimbered all about it. Jim, here, can foight, but do woman's work he can't. That is, and do it good. He mostly gets the tablecloth crooked. No, he's no hand at the girl's work."

"I'll show you," thought little Jim.

On a sudden the tablecloth was straight, and everything began to take its proper place on the table.

"Mother," ventured Pat, though he had not yet received the word, "the table's set pretty good this morning."

"So it is, Pat, so it is," responded the widow glancing it over.

"Maybe Jim can do girl's work after all."

"Maybe he can, Pat, but he'll have to prove it before he'll foind them that'll belave it. That's the way in this world. 'Tis not enough to be sayin' you can do this and that. You've got to prove it. And how will you prove it? By doin' it, of course."

Little Jim heard, though he did not seem to be listening, being intent on making things uncomfortable for Barney and Tommie as far as he could in a quiet way.

It was a passion with little Jim to prove things—not by his mother's method, but by his own. So far his disputes had been with boys of his own size and larger, and if they doubted what he said he was in

the habit of proving his assertions with his fists. The result was that other boys either dodged him or agreed with him with suspicious readiness. His mother had given him a fair trial at the housework. He would prove to her that it was not because he could not, but because he would not, that he succeeded no better. He washed the dishes with care and put them shining on their shelves, and, a little later, poked his head out of the bedroom door into the kitchen.

"Mother," he said, "you think I can't make a bed good, don't you?"

The widow smiled. "I think you *don't* make it good," was her answer.

Jim's face darkened with resolution. "She thinks I can't," he said to himself. "I will, I guess."

With vim he set to work, and the bed was made in a trice. Little Jim stood off as far as he could and sharply eyed his work. "'Tain't done good," he snapped. And he tore it to pieces again. It took longer to make it the next time, for he

was more careful, but still it didn't look right. He tore the clothes off it again, this time with a sigh. "Beds is awful," he said. "It's lots easier to lick a boy than to make a bed." And then he went at it again. The third time it was a trifle more presentable, and the school bell was ringing.

"I've got to go, and I hain't proved it to her," he said. "But I'll work till I do, see if I don't. And then when I have proved it to her I won't make no more beds."

Jim was no favorite at school, where he had fallen a whole room behind the class he had started with. His teacher usually wore a long-suffering air when she dealt with him.

"She looks like she thought I didn't know nothin' and never would," he said to himself that morning when he had taken his seat after a decided failure of a recitation. "I'll show her." And he set to work. His mind was all unused to study, and—that day he didn't show her.

"Who'd 'a' thought it was so hard to prove things?" he said at night. "There's another day a-comin', though."

Now some people are thankful for showing. To little Jim, showing was degrading. Suddenly his mother perceived this, and felt a relief she had not known before.

"Whativer else Jim's got or not got," she said, "he's got a backbone of his own, so he has. Let him work things out for himsilf. Will I be showin' him how to make a bed? I won't that. I've been praisin' him too much, intoirely. I see it now. Praise kapes Pat and Moike and Andy doin' their best to get more of it. But it makes little Jim aisy in his moind and scornful loike, so his nose is in the air all the toime and nothin' done. A very little praise will do Jim. And still less of fault-findin'," she added.

"B'ys," she announced that evening, "Jim's took a turn. We'll stand off and watch him a bit. If he'll do roight for his own makin', sure and that'll be better

than for us to be havin' a hand in it. Give him his head and plinty of chances to prove things, and when he has proved 'em, own up to it."

The two brightened. "I couldn't believe little Jim was so bad, mother," said Mike.

"Bad, is it? Sure and he ain't bad yet. And now's the toime to kape him from it. 'Tis little you can be doin' with a spoiled anything. Would you belave it? He made his bed three toimes this mornin' and done his best at it, and me a-seein' him through the crack of the door where it was open a bit. But I can't say nothin' to him nor show him how, for showin's not for the loike of him. And them that takes iverything hard that way comes out sometimes at the top of the hape. Provin' things is a lawyer's business. If Jim iver gets to be a lawyer, he'll be a good wan."

Mike, when he went to bed that night, looked down at the small red head of the

future lawyer, snuggled down into the pillow, with the bedclothes close to his ears.

"I'll not believe that Jim will ever come to harm," he said.

CHAPTER XX

"There's another day comin'," little Jim had said when he lay down in acknowledged defeat on the night that followed his first day of real trying. The other day came, and after it another and another, and still others till the first of March was at hand. In the three months, which was the sum of those "other days," Jim had made good progress. For many weeks he had been perfect in the art of bed-making, but instead of giving up the practice of that accomplishment, as he had declared he would do so soon as he could prove to his mother that he could make a bed, he had become so cranky and particular that nobody else could make a bed to suit him. And as for studying—he was three classes ahead of where the first of December had found him. He could still whip any boy rash enough to

encounter him, but his days and even his evenings, in great part, were given to preparing a triumph over his mates in his lessons, and a surprise for his teacher.

The widow used to lean back in her husband's chair of an evening and watch him as he sat at the table, his elbows on the pine and his hands clutching his short hair, while the tiny, unshaded lamp stared in his face, and he dug away with a pertinacity that meant and insured success.

"And what book is that you've got?" she would ask when he occasionally lifted his eyes. He would tell her and, in a moment, be lost to all surroundings. For little Jim was getting considerable enjoyment out of his hard work.

"Pat nor Moike niver studied loike that," thought Mrs. O'Callaghan. "Nor did even Andy. Andy, he always jist loved his book and took his larnin' in aisy loike. But look at that little Jim work!" As for little Jim, he did not seem to observe that he was enjoying his mother's favorable regard.

"And what book is it you loike the best?" she asked one evening when Jim was about to go to bed.

"The history book," was the answer.

"And why?"

"'Cause there's always a lot about the big foightin' men in it."

"Ah!" said the widow. "Andy, he loiked the history book best, too. But I didn't know before 'twas for the foightin'."

"'Look at that little Jim work!'"

"'Tain't," briefly replied little Jim. And seeing his mother's questioning look he went on: "The history book's got a lot in it, too, about the way the people lived, and the kings and queens, and them that wrote poems and things. 'Tis for that Andy loikes the history book. He'll be writin' himself one of these days, I'm thinkin'. His teacher says he writes the best essays in the school already."

And having thus artlessly betrayed

Andy's ambition, little Jim went to bed.

"Ah!" thought the widow, getting out her darning, for only one could use the lamp at a time, and if Jim was of a mind to study she was of no mind to hinder him. "And is that what Andy'd be at? I wonder now if that's a good business? I don't know none of them that has it, and I can't tell." She drew one of Jim's stockings over her hand and eyed ruminatingly the prodigious hole in the heel. "That b'y do be gettin' through his stockin's wonderful," she said dismissing Andy from her thoughts. "Well, if he niver does no worse than that I'll not be complainin', but sure and he can make more darnin' than Pat and Moike and Andy put together."

Why are the winds of March so high? This spring they blew a gale. As they roared around corners and through tree tops and rushed down the streets with fury they made pedestrians unsteady. But they did not disturb little Jim, who but-

toned up his coat tight, drew down his hat and squared his shoulders as he went out to meet their buffets. There was that in little Jim that rejoiced in such weather.

One day those frantic winds reached down the big schoolhouse chimney and drew up a spark of fire from the furnace in the basement. They lodged it where it would do the most harm, and, in a short time, the janitor was running with a white face to the principal's office. As quietly as possible each teacher was called out into the hall and warned. And, in a few moments more, the pupils in every room were standing in marching order waiting for the word to file out. Something was wrong each room knew from the face of its teacher. And then came the clang of the fire bell, and the waiting ranks were terrified.

Little Jim's teacher on the second floor was an extremely nervous young woman. In a voice that trembled with fright and excitement she had managed to give her orders. She had stationed most of the

boys in a line running north and south and farthest from the door. Nearest the door were the girls and some of the smaller boys. And now they must wait for the signal that should announce the turn of their room to march out. As it happened, little Jim stood at the head of the line of boys, with the girls not far from him. The fire bell was ringing and all the whistles in the town screaming. Below them they could hear the little ones hurried out; above them and on the stairs the third-floor pupils marching; and then in little Jim's room there was panic. The girls huddled closer together and began to cry. The boys behind little Jim began to crowd and push. The nearest boy was against him when little Jim half turned and threw him back to place by a vigorous jerk of his elbow.

"Boys! Boys!" screamed the teacher. "Stand still!"

But they did not heed. Again they struggled forward, while the teacher covered her face with her hands in horror at

the thought of what would happen on the crowded stairways if her boys rushed out.

And then little Jim turned his back on the door and the girls near him and made ready his fists. "The first boy that comes I'll knock down!" he cried. And the line shrank back.

"We'll be burned! We'll be burned up!" shrieked a boy, one of the farthest away.

"You won't be burned naythe r," called back little Jim. "But you'll wish you was to-morrow if wan of you gets past me. Just you jump them desks and get past me and I'll lick you till you'll wish you was burnt up!"

Little Jim's aspect was so fierce, and the boys knew so well that he would do just as he said, that not one moved from his place. One minute little Jim held that line of boys. Then the door opened and out filed the girls. When the last one had disappeared little Jim stepped aside. "Go out now," he said with fine contempt, "you that are so afraid you'll get burned

yourselves that you'd tramp the girls down."

The last to leave the room were the teacher and little Jim. Her grasp on his arm trembled, but it did not let go, even when they had reached the campus which was full of people. Every business man had locked his doors and had run with his clerks to the fire. For this was no ordinary fire. The children of the town were in danger. At a distance Jim could see Pat with Larry in his arms and Barney and Tommie close beside him, and here and there, moving anxiously through the crowd, he saw General Brady and Mike and Andy. But the teacher's grasp on his arm did not relax. The fire was under control now and no damage had been done that could not be repaired. And the teacher was talking. And everybody near was listening, and more were crowding around and straining their ears to hear. Those nearest were passing the story on, a sentence at a time, after the manner of interpreters, and suddenly there was a shout,

"Three cheers for little Jim O'Callaghan!"

And then Mike came tearing up and gave him a hug and a pat on the back. And up came Andy with a look in his eyes that made little Jim forgive him on the spot for being first in that housework team in which he himself had been placed second by his mother. And the General had him by the hand with a "Well done, Jim!" At which Jim appeared a trifle bewildered. His fighting propensities had been frowned on so long.

At her wash place the widow had heard nothing, the wind having carried all sounds of commotion the other way, and there were no children in the family to come unexpectedly home bringing the news. It was when she stepped into her own kitchen, earlier than usual, and found Barney and Tommie there with Larry, who had accompanied them that day as visitor, that she first heard of the fire. And the important thing to Barney and Tommie was that their vacation had come sooner than

they had hoped. Later came Jim, stepping high from the General's praise. But his mother thought nothing of that. Jim's ways were apt to be airy.

But when Pat and Mike came to supper the story was told. The widow listened with an expression of pride. And when the story and the supper were finished she took little Jim by the hand and led him along the tortuous path through the furniture to the family seat of honor. "Sit there in the father's chair," she commanded. "I niver thought to be puttin' wan of my b'ys there for foightin', but foightin's the thing sometimes."

This was on Tuesday. The next day the leading paper of the town came out, and it contained a full account of little Jim's coolness and bravery.

"They'll be spoilin' little Jim, so they will," said the widow as she read with glistening eyes. Then she rose to put the paper carefully away among the few family treasures, and set about making little Jim a wonderful pudding. If he were

"'Three cheers for little Jim O'Callaghan.'"

to be spoiled she might as well have a hand in it. "Though maybe he won't be nayther," she said. "Him that had that much sinse had ought to have enough to stand praisin'."

That evening home came Andy to find his mother absorbed in the fascinating occupation of hearing from little Jim's own lips what each individual person had said to him during the day.

"Well," little Jim was saying just as Andy came in, "I should think they'd said 'most enough. I didn't do anything but keep them lubberly boys from trampin' the girls down, and it was easy enough done, too."

At which speech the widow perceived that, as yet, little Jim was not particularly spoiled by all his praise. "'Twas the history book that done it," thought the mother thankfully. "Sure and he knows he's done foine, but he ain't been braggin' on himself much since he took to that, I've noticed. There's books of all sorts, so there is, some for wan thing and some for

another, but it's the history book that cures the consate."

"We're very busy up at our house," observed Andy. And the widow could scarcely bring herself to heed him.

"Yes," went on Andy. "We've been baking cake to-day, and there's more to do to-morrow. The General and Mrs. Brady are going to give little Jim a party Friday evening. General Brady is wonderfully pleased with Jim."

Then indeed he had his mother's attention. "A party, is it?" she said with gratified pride. "'Tis the Gineral and Mrs. Brady that knows how to take a body's full cup and jist run it over. I couldn't have wished nothin' no better than that. And nobody couldn't nayther. I'll be up to-morrow mysilf to help and the nixt day, too. Don't tell me there's nothin' I can't be doin'. Jim can run things to home, can't you, Jim?"

Little Jim thought he could.

"I'll have Pat and Moike see to gettin' him a new suit to-morrow. It's late to be

gettin' him a new suit and him a-growin', but if he can't wear it nixt fall Barney can, and it's proud he'll be to do it, I'm thinkin'. 'Tisn't often the nixt youngest b'y has a chance to wear a new suit got for his brother because he done good and hadn't nothin' fit to wear to a party, naythe r. But Wennott's the town. A party for my Jim, and at Gineral Brady's, too! Would anybody have belaved it when we come with nothin' to the shanty? 'Tis the proudest thing that iver come to us, but no pride could there be about it if little Jim hadn't desarved it."

The widow's heart was full. "Ivery b'y, as he has come along, has made me proud," she went on. "First Pat and then Moike and then you, Andy, with your book, and now little Jim with his foightin'. And that's what beats me, that I should be proud of my b'y's foightin'. And I am that."

Friday evening seemed a long way off to little Jim when he lay down on his bed that night. He had never attended a

party in his life. Andy had spoken of cake, and, by private questioning, little Jim had discovered that there would be ice cream. He tried to imagine what a party was like, but having no knowledge to go on, he found the effort wearisome and so dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XXI

Little Jim had never been farther than General Brady's kitchen. It was a kitchen of which he approved because it had no path in it. One might go through it in a great hurry without coming to grief on some chair back, or the footboard of the mother's bed, or the rocker of the father's chair. Neither was one in danger of bringing up suddenly on the corner of the table, or against the side of the stove. The younger O'Callaghans were free from numerous bruises only because they knew their way and proceeded with caution. There was no banging the door open suddenly at the shanty, because there was always some article of furniture behind the door to catch it and bang it back sharply into a boy's face. It was upon these differences in the two kitchens that little Jim reflected when, arrayed in the

new suit, he slipped around the house and was ushered in by Andy.

"What's this!" cried the General, who had caught a glimpse of the swiftly scudding little figure as it rounded the corner. "What's this!" and he stood smiling at the door that opened from the back of the hall into the kitchen. "The hero of the hour coming in by the back door. This will never do, Jim. Come with me."

Bravely little Jim went forward. He stepped into the hall close behind the General, and suddenly glanced down. He could hardly believe his ears. Was he growing deaf? There walked the General ahead of him, and little Jim could not hear a footfall, neither could he hear his own tread.

But little Jim said nothing. They were now come to the hall tree, and the General himself helped his guest off with his overcoat and hung it beside his own. And as for little Jim, he could hang up his own cap when his host showed him where.

Then in through the parlor door they went and on through the folding doors into the sitting-room where Mrs. Brady stood among her plants. She had just cut two lovely roses from the same bush, and one she pinned on her husband's coat and the other on little Jim's jacket.

"Parties is queer," thought little Jim, "but they're nice."

For Mrs. Brady, in her quiet way, was contriving to let the boy understand that she thought exceedingly well of him. It began to grow dusk, but it was not yet so dark that little Jim failed to see Pat and Mike come in and run lightly up the stairs. And then there was a tramp of feet outside, the doorbell rang, and as the electric light flooded the house, Andy opened the front door and in trooped boys and girls.

Little Jim was amazed. Not one came into the parlor, but Andy sent them all upstairs.

"Is them boys and girls the party?" he asked quickly of Mrs. Brady.

"Yes, Jim," was the kind answer. "Your party."

Little Jim reflected. "I'd best not be lickin' any of the boys then this evenin'?" And he turned inquiring eyes on Mrs. Brady.

Mrs. Brady smiled. "No, Jim," she replied. "You must try to please them in every way that you can, and make them enjoy themselves."

"Let 'em do just as they're a moind to, and not raise a fuss about it?"

"Yes."

Little Jim straightened himself. "I never seen no parties before," he said, "but I guess I can run it."

And then downstairs came the guests and into the parlor to shake hands with General and Mrs. Brady and Jim. The gay company spread themselves through the parlor and sitting-room. They chattered, they laughed, they got up from their seats and sat down again, and all the time little Jim had a keen eye upon them. He had never before seen little girls

dressed so, and he noticed that every boy had a flower on his jacket.

And then little Jim bestirred himself. He was here, there, and everywhere. Did a girl suggest a game, Jim so engineered that the whole company were soon engaged in it, and he himself was the gayest player of all. Not once did he suggest anything. But often he slipped up to Mrs. Brady or the General and did what he had never done before in his life—asked advice.

"Am I runnin' it right?" he would whisper in Mrs. Brady's ear; and murmur apologetically to the General, "I never seen no parties before."

"And how do you like parties, Jim?" asked the General indulgently.

"I think there's nothin' to equal 'em," was the fervent answer. And then away went the young host.

At half-past nine Andy appeared at the hall door. Jim saw him and his heart sank. Was the party over? He feared so, since Mrs. Brady, followed by the

General, went out of the room. But in a moment the General came back to the doorway. The guests seemed to understand, for a sudden hush fell on the talkative tongues. The General saw Jim's uncertain expression and beckoned to him.

"We are going out to supper," he said. "Go ask Annie Jamieson to walk out with you."

Jim obeyed promptly. All at once he remembered the cake and ice cream. His heart swelled with pride as he led the pretty little girl across the hall and into the dining-room. And there were Pat and Mike and Andy showing the guests to their places and prepared to wait upon them. And if they beamed upon little Jim, he beamed back with interest. He was supremely happy. How glad he was that Mike had taught him Mrs. Brady's way of laying the table, and how to eat properly! He thought of his mother and wished that she might see him. But she was at home caring for Barney and Tommie and Larry.

"Sure and I can't lave 'em by thimsilves in the evenin'. Something moight happen to 'em," said this faithful mother.

Such food Jim had not tasted before, but he ate sparingly. He was too happy to eat, for little Jim, although extremely fond of pudding, was no glutton. There he sat with his auburn hair on end, his blue eyes bright and shining, smiles and grave looks chasing themselves over his face till the General was prouder of him than ever.

"I'm not sure but he's *the* O'Callaghan," he told his wife, when the children had gone back to the parlor for a final game before the party should break up. "But it is that mother of his and his older brothers who have brought him on."

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, Pat and Mike and Andy washed the dishes and put things to rights with three hearts full of pride in little Jim.

"To think the mother was afraid he would turn out an agitator!" said Pat.

"This night settles that," responded Mike. "He's more likely to turn out a society man. He'll be a credit to us all."

At last the guests were gone. And then for the first time little Jim's eyes examined with keen scrutiny the pretty rooms, while the General and Mrs. Brady kept silence, content to observe him with affectionate interest. Finally the boy came back from things to people, and he came with a sigh.

"Have you enjoyed yourself?" asked the General, smiling.

"Yes, sir. I never had such a toime before in my loife. 'Tis parties as are the thing." He paused and then asked, "How will I be goin' at it to get me a house like this?"

And then the General looked astonished. He had not yet fully measured little Jim's ambition that stopped at nothing. Hitherto it had been that pernicious ambition that desires, and at the same time, lazily refuses to put forth the exertion necessary to attain, or it had been

that other scarcely less reprehensible ambition that exerts itself simply to outshine others, and Mrs. O'Callaghan had had good cause to be anxious about Jim. To-night it was the right sort of ambition, backed by a remarkably strong will and boundless energy. He looked up at the General with confidence and waited to be told just how he could get such a house for himself.

The General gazed down into the clear, unashamed depths of little Jim's blue eyes. The attitude of the O'Callaghan's toward him always touched him. His money had nothing to do with it, nor had his superior social position. It was he himself that the O'Callaghans respected, admired, loved and venerated, and this without in the least abating their own self-respect and independence. It was like being the head of a clan, the General told himself, and he liked it. So now he answered with his hand on little Jim's shoulder, "Work, my boy, and study, work and study."

"And is that all?" questioned Jim disappointedly. "Sure and that's like my mother tellin' me dustin' and dishwashin' was my two first steps."

"Well, they were your first steps, Jim, because they were the duties that lay nearest you. But it will take more than work and study, after all."

"I thought it would, sir. This is an awful nice house."

"Would you like to walk upstairs and look about?" asked the General.

"I would," was the eager answer.

So the General and Mrs. Brady and Jim went up.

"This is the sort of a room for my mother," declared little Jim, after he had carefully examined the large guest chamber. "Pat and Mike got her the summer kitchen, but I'll be gettin' her a whole house, so I will. Sleepin' in the kitchen will do for them that likes it. And now what's the rest of it besides work and study?"

"Have you ever seen any poor boys smoke cigars, Jim?"

"Yes, sir."

"And cigarettes?"

"Yes, sir."

"And pipes?"

"Yes, sir."

"And drink beer?"

"Yes, sir."

"And whisky?"

"Yes, sir."

"And chew tobacco?"

"Yes, sir."

"Those are the boys who, when they are men, are going to be poor. Mark that, Jim. They are going to be poor."

"They won't have any house like this?"

"Not unless somebody who has worked hard gives it to them, or unless they cheat for it, Jim."

"Huh!" said Jim. "I'm down on cheatin'. I'll lick any boy that cheats me or tries to, and I don't want nobody to give me nothin'." And with that little

Jim cooled down to pursue his former train of thought.

"And if I work and study and let them things alone I can have a house like this some day?"

"Yes, Jim, if some misfortune does not befall you, like a long sickness in the family, or an accident to you."

"I'm goin' to try for it," declared Jim with decision. "Them that would rather have cigars and such than a nice house like this can have 'em, and it's little sense they've got, too. I'll take the house."

The General laughed. "You will take it, Jim, I don't doubt," he said. "Come to me whenever you wish to ask any questions, and I will answer them if I can."

"I will, sir," replied little Jim. "And when you want me to I'll wash your dishes. I said once I wouldn't, but now I will."

"Thank you, Jim," responded the General.

Peppery, headstrong little Jim went

home that night walking very erect. Pat and Mike were one on each side of him, but he hardly knew it, he was so busy looking forward to the time when he should have a house like the General's,

"Pat and Mike were one on each side of him."

when his mother would pin a flower on his coat, and he should give parties, and as many of them as he chose.

And of all these plans his mother heard with wonder and astonishment.

"Your party's made a man of you, Jim," said the widow at last. "I'd niver

have thought of a party doin' it, nayther, though I was wantin' it done bad. Your father was the man as loiked noice things, and he'd have got 'em, too, if sickness hadn't come to him."

And now little Jim's reward had come. At last his mother had said he was like his father. He was as good as Pat and Mike and Andy, and his heart swelled.

"But, Jim, dear, you'd be gettin' your house quicker if we was all to help toward it."

"And then 'twouldn't be mine," objected Jim.

"No more it wouldn't," assented Mrs. O'Callaghan, "but 'twould be better than livin' in the shanty years and years. You don't want to kape livin' here till you have a foine house loike the Gineral's, do you, Jim?"

"No," reluctantly answered the little fellow, glancing about him.

"I knowed you didn't. For sure you're not the wan to let your ambition run away

with your sinse. A neat little house, now, with only two b'ys to a bedroom and wan bedroom for me—what do you say to it, Jim?"

Then and there it was settled, and that night each boy had a different dream about the neat little house to be—Jim's, of course, being the most extravagant. That week the first five dollars toward it was deposited with the General.

"And I'll be keepin' a sharp lookout on Barney and Tommie," was Jim's unasked promise to his mother. "You've no idea what little chaps smoke them cigarettes. I can fix it. I'll just be lettin' the boys know that every wan of 'em that helps Barney and Tommie to wan of them things will get a lickin' from me."

"Is that the best way, do you think, Jim?"

"Sure and I know it is. I've seen them big boys givin' 'em to the little wans, particular to them as their folks don't want to use 'em. The General's down on them

things, and Barney and Tommie shan't have 'em."

"Five dollars in the bank!" exclaimed the widow. She was surrounded by her eldest four sons, for it was seven o'clock in the morning. "Two years we've been in town, and them two years has put all four of you where I'm proud of you. All four of you has sat in the father's chair for good deeds done. What I'm thinkin' is, will Barney and Tommie and Larry sit there, too, when their turn comes?"

"They will that!" declared Jim with authority.

"Of course they will, mother," encouraged Pat.

"They are father's boys, too," said Andy.

"And *your* boys, mother. Where else would your boys sit?" asked Mike.

And then the widow smiled. "I belave you'll ivery wan of you come to good," she said. "There's small bad ahead of b'ys that has a bit of heartsome blarney for their mother, and love in their eyes to

back their words. Some has farms and money. But if any one would be tellin' of my riches, sure all they've got to say is, 'The Widow O'Callaghan's b'ys.'"

THE END.

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